

2018

Strategies to Reduce Maquiladora Employee Absenteeism in Mexico

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Antonio Cachazo

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Walden University
2018

Abstract

Strategies to Reduce Maquiladora Employee Absenteeism in Mexico

by

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MBA, University of Texas at El Paso, 2005

BSBM, University of Phoenix, 2002

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

April, 2018

Abstract

Employee absenteeism is a costly problem, affecting organizations' ability to deliver products and services. Finding strategies managers use to help reduce employee absenteeism is critical to sustain operational capacity, control labor costs, and to achieve organizational success. Drawing from the Herzberg 2-factors theory, the purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore strategies implemented by six business organizations to reduce employee absenteeism in the maquiladora industry in Mexico. Through semistructured interviews, 11 management participants shared strategies implemented to reduce absenteeism. In addition, other data sources, such as organizational policies, management graphs, and meeting minutes were used. Data were coded and analyzed revealing 7 themes: (a) organizational support, (b) leadership quality, (c) compensation and benefits, (d) disciplinary actions, (e) recognition, (f) work environment, and (g) staffing policies. The research findings may contribute to business practice by providing organizational managers broader perspectives for the development of strategies to effectively manage employee absenteeism. These findings might also contribute to social change by improving organizational communication, supporting workers' personal needs, recognizing employees' contributions, enhancing relationships with supervisors, improving the work environment, and raising employee take-home pay.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my late father, Mauricio Antonio Cachazo Muñoz who inspired me through his example, support, guidance, dedication, professionalism, and achievement to pursue the highest level of academic and professional success. To my mother, Clecia Mercedes D' Jesus de Cachazo, who has taught me that every challenge can be overcome with discipline and perseverance, and provide me with unconditional care, guidance, and love. To my children, Alejandro Cachazo and Bryant Cachazo, thank you for your support, understanding, and love during long, arduous journey with me. I hope this experience serves you as an example to follow your dreams desires in pursuit of a happy, productive, meaningful life for you and those around you. And most importantly, I dedicate this work to my loving, caring, and very supportive wife, M. Esther Anguiano. You have witnessed, encouraged, cheered, and been by my side during the effort, dedication, sleep deprivation, and struggles through this journey. I love you and forever... thank you.

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to express my gratitude to my Chair, Dr. Kathleen Barclay, for her guidance, timely feedback, patience, and support needed to complete the DBA journey and fulfill my dream of becoming a doctor of business administration. I would like to also acknowledge my second committee person, Dr. Godwin Igein and the URR, Dr. Annie Brown, for their helpful and timely responses.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	iv
Section 1: Foundation of the Study.....	1
Background of the Problem	2
Problem Statement	3
Purpose Statement.....	3
Nature of the Study	3
Research Question	5
Interview Questions	5
Conceptual Framework.....	6
Operational Definitions.....	6
Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations.....	8
Assumptions.....	8
Limitations	8
Delimitations.....	9
Significance of the Study	10
A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature.....	13
Absenteeism.....	14
The Herzberg Two-Factor Theory	16
Individual Dimension.....	18
Social Dimension	29
Leadership Dimension	34

Organizational Dimension	45
Cultural Dimension.....	52
Summary.....	56
Section 2: The Project.....	60
Purpose Statement.....	60
Role of the Researcher	61
Participants.....	62
Research Method and Design	66
Research Method	66
Research Design.....	68
Population and Sampling	71
Ethical Research.....	75
Data Collection Instruments	78
Data Collection Technique	81
Data Organization Technique	85
Data Analysis	87
Reliability and Validity.....	90
Confirmability and Dependability	91
Credibility and Transferability.....	93
Transition and Summary.....	95
Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change	97
Introduction.....	97

Presentation of the Findings.....	97
Theme 1: Organizational Support.....	99
Theme 2: Leadership Quality	102
Theme 3: Compensation.....	104
Theme 4: Disciplinary Actions.....	107
Theme 5: Recognition.....	109
Theme 6: Work Environment.....	111
Theme 7: Staffing Policies	114
Findings Tied to Herzberg Two-Factor Theory.....	115
Applications to Professional Practice	116
Implications for Social Change.....	118
Recommendations for Action	118
Recommendations for Further Research.....	120
Reflections	121
Conclusion	122
References.....	124
Appendix A: Interview Protocol.....	157
Appendix B: Interview Questions.....	159
Appendix C: Cooperation Letter from a Research Partner	160
Appendix D: Invitation to Participate in the Study.....	161

List of Tables

Table 1. Frequency of Themes Related to Effective Strategies to Reduce Employee

Absenteeism..... 98

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Foreign competitors have put pressure on American companies to perform globally. Porter and Rivkin (2012) indicated that research results regarding the American economy suggested that the United States faces competitive challenges in labor productivity gains. Furthermore, 71% of managers reported a negative outlook in U.S. competitiveness, resulting in U.S. businesses losing two out of three proposals to foreign competitors (Porter & Rivkin, 2012). The loss of customers by the inability to compete in a global market could jeopardize business' performance and survival. Baily and Bosworth (2014) highlighted that the United States continues to produce less in the country, and the U.S. corporations continue to shift operations overseas. One of these places overseas that host American companies is Mexico.

In Mexico, employee absenteeism is a problem. Vargas and Hernandez (2015) indicated that Mexico has a high level of productivity loss because of employee absenteeism. The authors reported that drops of productivity derived from employee absenteeism affected other employees who were then tasked to make up for the work from missing employees. Evans-Lacko and Knapp (2016) estimated the cost of absenteeism, linked to depression alone, to be \$928 per person in Mexico. Employee absenteeism resulted in additional costs of 7% or \$70 for every \$1000 of companies' payroll in Mexico (Vargas, 2014). In summary, employee absenteeism has a negative economic impact on companies' bottom lines as well as society in general which is why this was the focus of my study.

Background of the Problem

Employee absenteeism is one of the oldest human resource (HR) management problems in both public and private organizations of many countries (Cucchiella, Gastaldi, & Ranieri, 2014). Absent employees cause disruptions, conflict, loss of productivity, friction between employees and supervisors, and deteriorates company margins. Absent employees increase costs, especially in labor-intensive operations, by adding to the cost such as temporary replacement, and creating an extra burden to supervisors who have to spend more time monitoring temps (Castle, 2013).

Managers play a key role in both communicating and enforcing organizational policies. Kim and Beehr (2017) found that leaders have a significant influence on employee deviant behavior. Deviant employee behavior, including employee voluntary absenteeism, jeopardizes organizational goals and managers could benefit from deploying strategies to enhance feelings of self-efficacy and psychological ownership to minimize deviant behaviors such as employee absenteeism (Kim & Beehr, 2017). A positive supervisor-employee relationship could help manage employee job satisfaction, morale, performance and attendance. Other factors affecting employees' decisions to be absent from work may include personal and family pressures, specific characteristics of the job, stress and burnout, perceived legitimacy of absenteeism, and others. Gosselin, Lemyre, and Corneil (2013) referred to employee absenteeism as one of the most common and costly HR problems that concerns managers and researchers. In this study, the goal was to explore strategies used by operational managers to help reduce employee absenteeism.

Problem Statement

Employee absenteeism has a negative impact in the workplace by lowering productivity while increasing costs (Mani & Jaisingh, 2014). In Mexico's manufacturing sector, employee absenteeism accounts for over 82.5 million work hours lost with an estimated cost of \$266 million a year on wages alone (National Institute of Statistics, 2016). The general business problem was that employee absenteeism is a common business burden affecting organizational ability to sustain operational capacity, to control labor costs, and to achieve organizational goals. The specific business problem was that some operational managers lack effective strategies for reducing employee absenteeism.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive multiple case study research was to explore what effective strategies operational managers use to reduce employee absenteeism. The targeted population included managers from six U.S. companies in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, maquila operations. In addition, I sought secondary data, such as company documentation and archival data to explore strategies to reduce employee absenteeism used by managers. The findings from this study may contribute to social change by expanding organizational understanding of the factors that contribute to employee absenteeism of line-employees and effective strategies operational managers can use to help reduce employee absenteeism.

Nature of the Study

For this employee absenteeism study, I conducted a qualitative case study with purposeful sampling to interview onsite operational managers of U.S. companies in

Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. I did not consider the quantitative method approach adequate to provide in-depth descriptive manager insights into the different factors influencing employees' work attendance for this unique employee population. In quantitative research, the researcher tests hypotheses by collecting numerical data and performing statistical analysis to identify a cause and effect relationship to explain the phenomena (Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). By using quantitative methods, researchers limit findings to only predetermined measurable categories and prevent exploration of new perspectives (Yilmaz, 2013). By contrast, qualitative methods includes the interpretation, detail, meaning, and understanding of a phenomenon by capturing experiences through participants' testimonies (Wolgemuth et al., 2015). Therefore, I used a qualitative method to pursue in-depth narrative description of managers' strategies to reduce worksite employee absenteeism.

Using the case study design, researchers seek to understand and report data on real-life contexts with the opportunity to use multiple data sources of evidence through triangulation (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; Yin, 2014). Alternative qualitative designs did not address the purpose of this study. Researchers use a narrative design to explore the life of an individual or an event through the accounts or stories of one or two individuals in a chronological setting (Petty et al., 2012). If the objective is pursue theoretical explanations, researchers rely on grounded theory to go beyond mere descriptions and attempt to provide a fundamental framework for further research (Wolfswinkel, Furtmueller, & Wilderom, 2013). On cultural inquiry, researchers select ethnography to focus on studying a common culture group in their natural setting over

extended periods of time to describe and interpret particular aspects of the culture (Kriyantono, 2012). Finally, the phenomenological design involves a return to the essence of the lived experiences of participants to provide an overall meaning from their point of view (Moustakas, 1994). The use of these alternative qualitative design approaches would not have provided in-depth understanding about effective organizational strategies currently in use to help reduce operations' line-employee absenteeism which is why I used a case study design.

Research Question

The central research question for this qualitative case study was: "What strategies do operational managers use to help reduce employee absenteeism?"

Interview Questions

1. How effective is your current strategy in dealing with employee absenteeism?
2. What are the top three causes that you think have affected worker absenteeism within the past year in this company?
3. How each of the three causes you mentioned was addressed within the strategy to reduce absenteeism?
4. How do you measure the progress made in the reduction of employee absenteeism in the organization?
5. How is the absenteeism reduction strategy managed companywide?
6. What other additional steps, not talked about yet, have been taken into account to reduce employee absenteeism?

Conceptual Framework

I focused on the Herzberg two-factor theory to support the exploration of employee absenteeism factors, such as motivation and job satisfaction, which have potential influence on employee attendance behavior (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). The focus of the two-factor theory is about people at work and their attitudes toward their jobs (Herzberg et al., 1959).

Herzberg identified two factors to consider in evaluating job satisfaction: hygiene factors and motivation factors. Herzberg defined hygiene factors as those needed to be in place in order for organizations to prevent employees to become dissatisfied. Motivational factors are those elements needed to help drive employees to higher levels of performance (Herzberg et al., 1959). When present, motivational factors positively contribute to job satisfaction and employee motivation. Herzberg believed that both hygiene and motivation factors dictate employees' behavior at work. The Herzberg two-factor theory served as a framework to understand how organizations could use the study findings to design better strategies that may influence employees' commitment to work attendance and lower employee absenteeism.

Operational Definitions

Boredom: A work related unpleasant state of mind which may be caused by inadequate work load, repetitive tasks, or lack of task variety resulting in lack of concentration drifting individuals' attention away from current job related activities (van Hooff & van Hooft, 2014).

Citizenship fatigue: Citizenship an employee state where, even though still effective at work, the employee has feelings of being worn out, tired, on edge, frustrated or even unappreciated from the belief that the employee would be called to go beyond the call of duty for its organization (Bolino, Hsiung, Harvey, & LePine, 2015).

Job demands: The emotional, quantitative, and qualitative workload elements of the job that employees must face with a certain degree of physical and psychological effort at a cognitive and emotional cost to the employee in terms of well-being and levels of distress (Desrumaux et al., 2015).

Job resources: Physical, psychological, social, and organizational elements of the job that employers puts in place to help employees reduce job demands by enabling the achievement of work objectives, promote personal growth, learning, and development (Seppälä et al., 2015).

Maquiladora: Export assembly plants, mostly located in the Mexico borderland with the United States, which produces components and finished products for the United States and other foreign markets (García-Alcaraz et al., 2015).

Organizational citizenship behavior: The discretionary intentional behaviors that employees use to go above and beyond their role expectation to improve the organization and impress management, likely resulting in an improved reputation on the employee (Bolino, Klotz, Turnley, & Harvey, 2013).

Organizational commitment: A psychological bond between workers and the organization that employees them (Lambert, Griffin, Hogan, & Kelley, 2014).

Voluntary absenteeism: Employees choosing not to show up to work for reasons under their control including lack of motivation to attend work (Duff, Podolsky, Biron, & Chan, 2015).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions refer to those factors out of the researcher's control taken into account as being true for the research purpose. Simon and Goes (2013) referred to assumptions as elements out of the researcher's control, but without their presence the study would lose relevance: therefore, researchers use assumptions to focus research on a specific problem without the need to prove all other additional elements. I presumed the following assumptions: (a) employee absenteeism was an important problem faced by U.S. operating maquiladoras in Ciudad Juarez, (b) organizations with good employee relations' potentially had effective employee absenteeism strategies, (c) selected managers would have firsthand information regarding employee absenteeism strategies implemented, (d) all participants were willing to participate honestly in the interview by responding promptly and truthfully, (e) participants would answer interview questions thoughtfully and in depth, (f) all the interviews were to be conducted in their entirety, and (g) organizations were willing to share documents and archival information for analysis.

Limitations

It is important for researchers to acknowledge the study limitations (Connelly, 2013). Research limitations refer to potential situations or circumstances in a study from conditions beyond the control of the researcher that restrict the study conclusions. Simon

and Goes (2013) defined limitations as potential research study weaknesses that could interfere with the findings of the study's validity. There were several limitations in this study that included (a) population size and selection, (b) interviewee recollection and ability to communicate the experiences and events, (c) limited organizational documents and archival records, (d) time and length of the study, and (e) management participation rate. The availability of data is a limiting factor to deepness and richness in qualitative studies (Yin, 2014).

Delimitations

The study delimitations refer to those characteristics that define the boundaries of the study. Bilbo, Bigelow, Escamilla, and Lockwood (2015) referred to study delimitations as the ones used to establish the boundaries of the study and the data collected. Researchers are considered to have control over and chose the delimitations. These delimitations included the following elements: (a) research objective and question, (b) variables of interest, (c) theoretical perspective, and (d) participants' locations (see Simon & Goes, 2013).

For this qualitative case study's delimitations, I narrowed the scope of the study to focus on what strategies managers use to help reduce employee absenteeism using a multiple case study of U.S. operated maquiladoras in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. During the data collection, the study took place over a period of 2 months following the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. This restriction of time could have limited participant responses to those participants available during that period. I restricted the location to six U.S. operated organizations selected in the Ciudad Juarez, Mexico

area. I only sought the managerial and supervisory level of participants to interview from these six organizations and continued until data saturation was achieved. Data saturation is the foundation for adequate sample size in qualitative studies (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). The findings of this study only applied to the organizations included in the case study but may benefit other organizations within the same area and industry as well.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is to expand and contribute to the existing understanding of strategies to help reduce employee absenteeism in labor-intensive production and service environments. In the conduction of everyday business activities, many companies must address the challenges of absenteeism from their employees. These work absence events cause constraints on normal business operations. Mexico's manufacturing sector employee absenteeism accounts for over 82.5 million work hours lost with an estimated cost of \$266 million a year (National Institute of Statistics, 2016). In addition to the high costs and the detrimental effect to production capacity, employee work absences cause conflicts and additional pressures to coworkers. Employee absenteeism places an extra burden on employees who show up for work and have to pick up the workload left by the absent employees. Castle (2013) recognized this shift in work load and warned that as a result, the transfer of work from absent to attending employees may lead to lower employee satisfaction on the remaining employees who have to take on the burden of absent employees.

Employee absenteeism is a costly problem for firms everywhere (Cucchiella et al., 2014; Störmer & Fahr, 2013). Consistent with the negative economic impact of absenteeism, Castle (2013) posited that worker absenteeism is disruptive for management and for the organizations' ability to provide quality service to customers. Biron and De Reuver (2013) acknowledged the ongoing effort by the research community to increase the understanding of employee absenteeism and the multiple factors that contribute to this phenomenon. Within the strategies to help reduce employee absenteeism, I looked for potential influential factors such as direct supervision, management, organizational support, job characteristics, coworkers, family, and cultural aspects. Jogaratnam (2017) found that intangible organizational resources influence organizational performance and sustain competitive advantage. Organizational success may contribute to employees' perceptions of well-being. Therefore, some of these intangible organizational factors may affect employee absenteeism mediating through the effective use of organizational resources.

From the business practice perspective, the findings of this study can be used by organizational operational managers to develop strategies by assessing policy, incentives, and management practices to more efficiently deal and respond to employee absenteeism. The understanding of factors and strategies to reduce employee withdrawal behaviors, such as employee absenteeism, are of high significance to improve business performance (Swider & Zimmerman, 2014). Reducing employee absenteeism can lower conflicts of missed expectations between employees and management. In addition, the reduction of

employee absenteeism may better position organizations for meeting customer expectations and sustain levels competitiveness in the market place.

The results of this research study may contribute to a positive social impact by improving understanding of influencing factors that determine employees' decision to go to work or to be absent. These findings, when applied, might yield improved organizational policy development, better supervisor-employees communication exchange with reduction of supervisor-employee stress, increased employee well-being, decreased voluntary absenteeism, and increased employee take-home pay. Pfeifer (2014) found a correlation between fewer absent days and higher bonus payments. Therefore, lower absenteeism might improve employees' income, reduce confrontation between supervisor-employees, improve worker performance, and improve the chances for advancement on wages and upper mobility for employees.

With the analysis from the data collected, I gained understanding of strategies dealing with employees' absenteeism to prepare findings, allowing me to establish conclusions and propose recommendations. By emphasizing the different factors considered to shape effective absenteeism strategies, I provide findings that may contribute to the literature of employee absenteeism and effective strategies to reduce absenteeism or improve work attendance. Firms and policy makers value information on absenteeism determinants to help shape policies (Störmer & Fahr, 2013). Operational managers could gain an understanding of effective employee absenteeism management and policymaking practices that have been put in place to deal with employee absenteeism.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of the qualitative case study was to explore effective strategies for reducing production line employee absenteeism in the U.S. operations within the maquila industry of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Here, I provide a critical analysis and synthesis of the foundation for the topic of absenteeism and influential factors in employee absenteeism. I organized the literature review by major themes that may affect employees' attitudes and behaviors decisions to be absent from their workplace as well as themes to craft strategies to reducing employee absenteeism. I also provide an analysis and synthesis of Herzberg's two-factor theory (Herzberg et al., 1959), which served as the study's conceptual framework.

The sources for the literature included the Walden University Library databases, local academic libraries, purchased books, and journals. Among the Walden University Library research databases, I used the following: ABI/INFORM Global, Business Resource Complete, EBSCO, Sage, ProQuest, and Science Direct. An extensive number of articles exist that included elements related to employee absenteeism. Based on the minimal availability of articles dedicated to employee absenteeism, I researched studies where the topic of employee absenteeism was a sub topic under another context. For example, Patton and Johns (2012) noted that most articles found in their meta-analysis were not specifically on employee absenteeism indicating the need for the use of articles in other primary foci, including employee absenteeism as a secondary context.

I used the following keywords to search the different databases: *employee absenteeism, employee satisfaction, employee motivation, employee happiness, employee*

engagement, emotional intelligence, work stress, organizational commitment, and leadership. By using these keywords, I was able to find scholarly references related to employee absenteeism in the databases. The literature used in this review meets the 85% requirement of being less than 5 years old from anticipated completion date with the number of peer-reviewed sources of 102 or 87.9%. The literature review includes a total number of 116 references are included in this literature review and 14 references are older than 5 years dating as far back as 1959. References by category are: (a) 113 journals and articles, (b) one government report, and (c) two additional resources.

Absenteeism

Absenteeism refers to the employee's unilateral decision of missing work when scheduled by the employer (Halbesleben, Whitman, and Crawford, 2014). Employee absenteeism constitutes an interruption of the firm's plans, execution, and achievement of commitment to customers and business partners. Hopkins (2014) studied the employee absence phenomena from both the managerial approaches and workers experienced points of view. This approach brought about understanding that operational managers and staff have a role in both the cause and consequence of their role in employee absenteeism. Employee absenteeism interferes with the achievement of business results. Biron and Bamberger (2012) stated that absenteeism strongly impacts employee productivity. When employees unexpectedly do not show to work, the work gets interrupted or does not get done. In either case, employee absenteeism reduces employees' productivity, negatively affecting costs from the loss capacity caused by the missing employee (Allisey, Rodwell, & Noblet, 2016).

Løkke (2014) raised the importance of finding determinants of absences to find managerial approaches for adequate predictive tools. Hopkins (2014) highlighted the need to conduct further studies on absence management and workers' experiences especially in work environments such as manufacturing. Both Løkke and Hopkins acknowledged the need to further understand absenteeism to improve organizations' ability to manage and possibly mitigate the negative consequences of employee absenteeism. Pransky (2014) estimated productivity losses in the hundreds of billions a year as a result of employee absenteeism in the United States alone. These levels of productivity losses undermine organizations competitive positioning and their ability to confront other competitive pressures. Employee absenteeism is not limited to the United States, and its economic burden affects organizations everywhere. Belita, Mbindyo, and English (2013) conducted a study on absenteeism and found thousands of documented references from all over the world. Employee absenteeism is subject to occur in organizations worldwide and obstructs organizations competitive position in a growing competitive market. Therefore, the importance of understanding strategies that would minimize absenteeism events could benefit those organizations that rely on employees to conduct their day-to-day activities.

Employees' decisions to be absent cover a broad range of causes. Ramzan, Riaz, and Tariq (2013) found that work stress, workload, family-work conflict, and employee turnover included positive associations with organizational inefficiency due to multiple causes including absenteeism. Conversely to work overload, Allisey et al. (2016) found an association between low workload and absenteeism which brings employees' effort

and sense of contribution to the discussion. As a result, management has a duty to pursue strategies that could effectively deal with the absenteeism problem to achieve and improve business results. One approach to exploring employees' absenteeism is through employees' job attitudes which, according to Herzberg, would improve morale, happiness, and a sense of achievement (Herzberg et al., 1959).

The Herzberg Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg developed the two-factor theory, also known as the motivation-hygiene theory, in 1959. In the two-factor theory, Herzberg focused on people at work and their attitudes toward their jobs (Herzberg et al., 1959). Founded on the study of accountants and engineers, Herzberg sought to understand what work conditions made employees satisfied or dissatisfied with their jobs. Herzberg defined two factors to evaluate job satisfaction. These two factors are hygiene factors and motivation factors and both help understand employee's behavior. In the scope of this study, I used these factors to understand employees' behavior and how these factors are embedded in strategies dealing with employee absenteeism.

Herzberg defined hygiene factors as those elements put in place by the organizations to prevent employees from becoming dissatisfied (Herzberg et al., 1959). Herzberg clarified that hygiene factors do not result in high levels of motivation, but if not in place, lead to job dissatisfaction on the workforce. Diestel, Wegge, and Schmidt (2014) found a correlation between job dissatisfaction and employee individual absenteeism. Therefore, management should pursue strategies that avoid job dissatisfaction among employees by managing the hygiene factors. According to

Herzberg, hygiene factors involve factors such as (a) working conditions, (b) company policy, (c) quality of supervision, (d) base salary, (e) job security, (f) benefits, (g) interpersonal relation, and (h) status. Employees consider these factors as fundamental and expect organizations to have these hygiene factors under control. Failure to achieve acceptable levels of hygiene factors can result in job dissatisfaction and later absenteeism.

Motivational factors refer to those that organizations must take put in place to help employees pursue higher levels of performance (Herzberg et al., 1959). Motivational factors typically include interest in the job, recognition for achievement, responsibility for the task, and opportunity for growth (Herzberg et al., 1959). Management should incorporate motivational factors when designing absenteeism reduction strategies. Strategies targeting these needs influence job satisfaction and increase employee motivation that is associated with lower rates of absenteeism. Conversely, Shantz and Alfes (2015) noted that personal motivation may lead to voluntary workplace attendance. Organizations that pursue a high level of hygiene and a high degree of motivation can achieve the ideal situation where employees are motivated and satisfied with their jobs. Herzberg stated that the combination of hygiene factors and motivation factors helped dictate employees' behavior at work.

Herzberg suggested that the study of employees' job attitudes may provide benefits (Herzberg, 1959). These benefits include the reduction of absenteeism in organizations, better use of HR from communities, and the ability to increase happiness and self-realization to individuals. Herzberg (2003) asserted that employees were most

motivated by intrinsic factors such as an interesting job assignment, an increasing responsibility, and the opportunity to be challenged to perform. It is important for organizations to incorporate these factors to positively influence job attitudes and work attendance. Halbesleben et al. (2014) referred to the workplace relationship exchanges that help shape employees' job attitudes which are linked to employees' decisions of whether to attend work. Therefore operational managers could benefit from understanding the job attitudes that result in job satisfaction, avoid job dissatisfaction, and enhance motivation to position organizations to manage better and reduce employee absenteeism. Boon, Belschak, Den Hartog, and Pijnenburg (2014) explained that individuals differ regarding their expectations and attitudes toward working conditions and thus the organization.

Individual Dimension

Researchers studied employee absenteeism from the individual employee perspective. Addae, Johns, and Boies (2013) noted the historical tendency to view workplace absenteeism as an individual-level behavior susceptible to individual-level influence. Research on the challenge of employee absenteeism from the individual employee perspective could include multiple factors, which should be considered when evaluating absenteeism.

Emotional context. Emotions are present in all facets of human interactions shaping attitudes and behaviors. These interactions are noticeable in the workplace, where subordinates perform tasks and achieve goals under the observant eye and expectations of supervisors. Peng et al. (2015) pointed to the concern for organizations to

recognize employees' emotional aspects of the job including ways for employees to find work meaningful, perceive a strong collective identity, and an appealing vision. The lack of these emotional aspects of the job can help compensate job deviant behavior such as absenteeism by influencing employee attitudes and behaviors toward work challenges.

In a study of the relationship between emotional labor and absenteeism, Nguyen, Groth, and Johnson (2013) found that long-term emotional labor produces both poor employee well-being outcome, disconnection with the job, and absenteeism. Lack of employee interest could result in individuals finding satisfaction only from activities outside work, making employees lose interest in their jobs and even resulting in boredom. Van Hooff and van Hooft (2014) noted that employee boredom is a common negative emotional experience at the workplace. Furthermore, when workers experienced boredom at work, employees continuously pursue ways for coping with the negative emotional experience by commonly quitting the activity. In a study exploring consequences of workplace boredom, van Hooff and van Hooft described workplace boredom as a negative, deactivating emotional work experience, related to distress, depressive complaints, and counterproductive work behaviors. Harju, Hakanen, and Schaufeli (2014) reported that workplace boredom is related to employee absenteeism. This boredom may suggest that firms need to pursue interesting jobs and empirical thinking may suggest that a variety of tasks could be ideal to achieve lower levels of absenteeism.

Alternatively, Castle (2013) found that for labor intensive jobs, consistent assignments resulted in less absenteeism. Researchers need to pursue more understanding of how the variety of job tasks affects absenteeism. From one point of view, a variety of

tasks may be attractive for certain people and jobs (Allisey et al., 2016), but from another, consistent work could be more effective in promoting employee attendance (Castle, 2013). There is not a one single approach to the answer to solve employees' attendance problems. Enns, Currie, and Wang (2015) found that job strain, autonomy, and control over work and flexible schedule were as much of a predictor of employees' absences as chronic conditions and depression. The basic recommendation from Enns et al. is that organizations may benefit by providing greater workplace autonomy if possible to reduce absenteeism.

In addition to working conditions to reduce emotional distress, van Hooff and van Hooft (2014) proposed organizations to decrease work boredom by making jobs more interesting and meaningful, increasing feedback interactions, and raising social support, to avoid job dissatisfaction and consequently absenteeism. Mitonga-Monga and Cilliers (2016) found a positive relationship between emotional attachment and job satisfaction, as well as one between emotional attachment and organizational commitment. Emotional involvement of employees on their jobs could result in improved employee engagement that might reduce employee voluntary absenteeism.

Another source of emotional strain is the employees' perception of job security. Consequently, Yi and Wang (2015) identified the issues of job insecurity as the workers' fear of losing their jobs potentially resulting in strains and sense of helplessness. In this case, employees who feel insecure on their current roles would disengage and stop trying, developing counterproductive work behaviors such as performing at the bare minimum and losing the enthusiasm of going to work. Nevertheless, Yi and Wang also found that

the total absence of job insecurity could also be negative to the organization by setting complacency throughout the organization, resulting in loss of organizational competitiveness. Bakker (2015) suggested that even motivated employees can experience temporary loss of enthusiasm, interest, and job fulfillment based on increases in job demands such as performance pressure, ambiguity in assignments, complexity of project, or workplace conflict. Short-term fluctuations in employee enthusiasm may influence engagement and can lead to fatigue, chronic problems, and low performance (Bakker, 2015). Sudden drops in enthusiasm may also explain some events of individual counterproductive work behavior including voluntary absenteeism even in employees that with generally good attendance history which support the need for this study.

Klotz and Bolino (2013) suggested that individual counterproductive work behaviors are ways to protest if an employee perceived injustice or under-appreciation within the organization. Furthermore, work absenteeism has been linked to employees' withdrawal behaviors due to negative factors (Negrini, Perron, & Corbière, 2014). As counterproductive withdrawal behaviors continue, the situation tends to repeat, where employees continue to not meet expectations. Accordingly, Bolino et al. (2015), highlighted two specific negative feelings on employees, stress and role overload, affecting workers' sense of overstretching resources, negatively impeding their ability to get the job done well. In a study on the impact of prior absenteeism and work attitudes, Swider and Zimmerman (2014) found a relationship between job withdrawal such as absenteeism and later withdrawal as well as a drop in job performance, as a strong predictor of later job withdrawal. This withdrawal may suggest a need to stop individual

employee repeated absenteeism before absenteeism becomes the preferred coping mechanism to deal with stressors both in the job and personal lives.

Stress sources. Carr, Kelley, Keaton, and Albrecht (2011) highlighted the importance of identifying sources and levels of employee stress as a vehicle to help organizations reduce voluntary absenteeism. Gosselin et al. (2013) linked employees' psychological stress with low levels of commitment as conditions contributing to absenteeism. Work stress includes identification as one of the primary sources of stress in people's lives (Carr et al., 2011). As global competition continues to pressure for more efficient, and competitive organizations, firms can adapt by raising demand from their processes which may result in stress to employees conducting these processes. Work related stress is derived from the multiple tasks, objectives, deadlines, and other activities typical of today's competitive environment. Biron and De Reuver (2013) suggested that absenteeism may be viewed as an equity-restoration behavior to work stress and as a response to different treatment or inconsistency of treatment among all employees. This difference of treatment may suggest that absenteeism could be triggered by the presence of inequalities in the workplace. Some of these inequalities may include differences in the workload, favoritism in the enforcement of rules, and access to supervision, and access to opportunities for advancement in the organization, among others. From the gender point of view, some studies indicated that women engage in more absenteeism than men (Avdic & Johansson 2016). According to Carr et al. (2011), there is evidence that relates conditions of stress and poor health. At the workplace, when pressure passes a certain

point, employee stress may cause health problems, relationship conflicts, and productivity drop (Carr et al., 2011).

Swider and Zimmerman (2014) suggested that employees with emotional exhaustion and overextension at their job could consider job withdrawal, such as absenteeism, as a means to recover from their emotionally taxing job. Furthermore, employees who feel incompetent at work and unlikely to complete their tasks may opt to reduce effort and avoid their jobs, both tending to lead to absenteeism. Feelings of incompetence also lead to job insecurity, which is an emotional exhaustion and stressor for employees. Zimmerman, Swider, Sang Eun, and Allen (2016) suggested that employees who experience stress and perceive work as an interference with personal lives are more prone to engage in absenteeism. In a study of ethical leadership and withdrawal work behavior, Zhang, Walumbwa, Aryee, and Chen (2013) found that emotional exhaustion mediated between employee uncertainty and employee withdrawal. Enns et al. (2015) noted that workers experiencing job strain were stressed and more likely to be depressed. These employee stress and emotional burdensome experiences, when ignored for extended periods of time, may result in job burnout and consequently in absenteeism. Employees with high levels of job burnout experience a feeling of depression, sense of professional failure, physical fatigue, and loss of personal motivation (Enns et al., 2015). Therefore, emotional exhaustion may be a factor leading to employee absenteeism and considered in strategies to help reduce employee absenteeism.

Other common sources of work-related stress include job demands, individual differences among co-workers, and social needs (Carr et al., 2011). For blue-collar

industries, such as manufacturing, workers' levels of stress are higher due to the higher job demands which are linked to productivity and profits (Beheshtifar & Nazarian, 2013). Vlasveld et al. (2013) noted that interpersonal conflicts at work, as a result of facing increased job demands, are stressful and lead to absenteeism. Beheshtifar and Nazarian (2013) indicated that in blue-collar environments, organizations demand high physical output and provide limited time for rest. These results indicated the need for organizations to provide adequate job resources to prevent some negative role behavior such as absenteeism and should be included on strategies to help reduce employee absenteeism.

O'Neill and Davis (2013) described the interactions between stress and well-being resulting in a predictive model where higher levels of stress resulted in negative physical health symptoms. Nevertheless, employees' personal problems, instead of work related problem, caused negative physical health symptoms (O'Neill & Davis, 2013). These personal problems may indicate that more research needs to take place to identify those out-of-work personal stressors causing additional stress on employees who may result in employees opting not to attend work. If left unattended, work-related stress often results in high employee absenteeism with its resulting consequences such as low productivity, poor quality, and increased turnover rates (Carr et al., 2011).

Despite the negative connotation, employees' stress at work may have a positive effect the employees' responses to psychological burnout. In a study that explored workers with similar responses to burnout and engagement measurements, Anthony-McMann, Ellinger, Astakhova, and Halbesleben (2017) found that some of the

interventions used to address burnout sources such as role ambiguity, role conflict, and role-stress fit, also work to improve the worker engagement resilience. Therefore, work stress and responses to stress situations could help enhance engagement while tailored to the individual.

An approach to dealing with employee stress and consequent employee absenteeism is workplace wellness programs. Rabarison, Lang, Bish, Bird, and Massoudi (2017) indicated that having workplace wellness programs potentially resulted in absenteeism costs savings. Researchers reported a 20% drop in absenteeism with a 27% drop in sick days as a direct result of employee engagement in physical activities promoted from workplace wellness programs (Health, Work and Wellbeing Programme, 2008). Bae and Goodman (2014) highlighted evidence from multiple studies indicating that investments in wellness programs' return on investments (ROI) can be partly seen in the reduction of absenteeism that encourage employers to attend such programs. Despite employees' active program participation, data indicates that organizations that promote workplace health culture potentially benefit all organizational members by positively influencing nonparticipants and providing all employees with the opportunities to improve their health (Rabarison et al., 2017).

Employee engagement and happiness. Albrecht (2012) studied employee engagement and found a positive correlation with organizational outcomes such as absenteeism. Some of the identified multiple sources including (a) individual conscientiousness, (b) work centrality, (c) interest in the work, (d) a corporate compelling mission, (e) trusted leadership, (f) efficient work processes, and (g) effective performance

management (Albrecht, 2012). From opposite perspective, Zimmerman et al. (2016) warned about employees' withdrawal behaviors which disconnect employees with their jobs and organizations with negative implications on various business metrics including employee absenteeism.

In a study on well-being and crafting own demands and resources, Tims, Bakker, and Derks (2013), shared that increased job demands on employees were associated with those employees experiencing lower levels of well-being. Allisey et al. (2016) referred to organizational job resources as those aspects of the job used to achieve work goals or reducing job demands, and can be classified in physical, social, and corporate resources. Therefore, increases in access to job resources, such as job control, learning opportunities, feedback on performance, and group support; positively improved employee well-being and engagement (Tims et al., 2013). On a study on job resources, Shantz and Alfes (2015) found that job resources had a negative correlation with absenteeism with those less engaged employees. Also, Shantz and Alfes suggested that job resources reduce absenteeism while strengthening engagement. Therefore, organizations could reduce absenteeism, while improving employees' well-being and happiness, by promoting employee self-determination, supervisor support, and work engagement as part of organizational job resources.

From the organization point of view, happy employees should attend work and be less likely to be absent. Happiness at work refers to a condition when employees display high levels of job satisfaction, and therefore, respond to and enjoy conducting their job duties at work (Bolino et al., 2013). Hence, Johnston, Luciano, Maggiori, Ruch, and

Rossier (2013) studied happiness at work and found that employees' perceived work stress was negatively and significantly correlated with career adaptability and happiness at work. A form of display of happiness at work comes from the employee identification with the firm by work centrality. Praskova, Creed, and Hood (2015) referred to this identification as career identity and defined it as an alignment of the employees' personal interest, motivation, and competencies to the job role. Work centrality influences the psychological identity of individual employees, provides a central importance to the worker's life and makes a fundamental conception of the employee's self (Uçanok & Karabatı, 2013; van Hooff & van Hooft, 2016). Work centrality and professional commitment have been negatively linked to employees' perception of legitimacy of absence (Patton & John, 2012; van Hooff & van Hooft, 2016).

Job satisfaction. Azeem and Akhtar (2014) conducted a study on job satisfaction and organizational commitment; and found that levels of pay and promotion opportunities positively contributed to job satisfaction. In addition, Azeem and Akhtar found facets of job satisfaction and organizational commitment to be positively related. Consequently, in a study of the relationship of employees' self-efficacy and job satisfaction; Wang, Hall, and Rahimi (2015) found that employees with higher levels of self-efficacy reported higher job satisfaction, lower levels burnout, and suffered less frequency of illness than those with low self-efficacy. Consequently, self-efficacy may be a good predictor of job satisfaction which is linked to lower absenteeism.

Wai Yee Betty and Fung Fal (2015) found a mediating effect between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Additionally, Diestel et al. (2014) indicated

that the workplace social work environment may influence employee job satisfaction and consequence patterns of absenteeism behavior. Conversely, Zimmerman et al. (2016) found that employees who had feelings of job insecurity were more likely to have a negative sense of job satisfaction, which could lead to absenteeism. These findings suggested that workers who have concerns about their ability or the organization willingness to keep them employed would be most likely to be absent.

Diestel et al. (2014) found that by improving job conditions satisfaction and reducing absenteeism within the employee's team, this strategy would dramatically reduce individual employee absenteeism. One contributor to job satisfaction is company-provided training. Kampkoetter and Marggraf (2015) suggested that company sponsored training provided positive effects on individual workers absent behavior. Training also enhanced job satisfaction, increasing commitment and attachment, which served as a mediating factor to reduce employees' absences (Kampkoetter & Marggraf, 2015). From an opposite perspective, Mitonga-Monga and Cilliers (2016) suggested that employees with low job satisfaction experienced higher absenteeism rates. Therefore, job satisfaction seems to be an important factor when evaluating employee absenteeism.

Individual characteristics. Drawing from a large number of meta-analyses, John (2011) highlighted that a large body of absenteeism research focused on individual characteristics. Gosselin et al. (2013) studying factors contributing to presenteeism and absenteeism found that employees attended work when ill; showing signs of stress, and overworked. In addition, Zimmerman et al. (2016) reported some of the underlying reasons for employee absenteeism: obligations to family matters, such as caring for an ill

family member, managing child care, doctor's appointments, and performing home or car repairs, among other personal responsibilities causing emotional strain between personal and work duties. Gosselin et al. noted that employees suffering from emotional stress or health issues, such as thyroid or high blood pressure would be more likely to be absent. In a study conducted on some health conditions, Howard and Potter (2014) identified a relationship between obesity and worker absenteeism with diabetes as a mediating factor for the most obese workers. Hence, it is important to review individual external factors since these affect decisions to go to work and for organizations to understand ways to respond to their personal challenges.

In a study based on information from secondary teachers; Toro and Ursúa (2014) noted that general sickness absence statistical data show different rates for women as compared to men. Azmat and Petrongolo (2014) identified that women devoted more time to taking care of household roles than men, reporting most frequent absences. Sayers and Jones (2015) referred to common claims that menstrual related symptoms might have a part on women absenteeism rates. Therefore, gender and employees' role in the family may play a role in policy making and strategy focus on reducing employee absenteeism.

Social Dimension

In addition to the individual, social surroundings affect decisions and behaviors. Therefore, employees are subject to social influence. In line with social influences, Barkhuizen, Jorgensen, and Brink (2014) highlighted that social non-working related to pressure, such as those of family responsibilities, impact workplace employee behaviors. Addae et al. (2013) recognized the growing body of research on the social influence on

absenteeism behaviors. Consequently, Butts, Casper, and Yang (2013) reported that work-family support policies, such as child care, were found to reduce work-family conflicts, improve job satisfaction, affective commitment, intention to stay, and reduced absenteeism. Therefore, employees' social environment is important to recognize for organizations attempting to improve attendance. In addition, Enns et al. (2015) stressed the importance of social support by the employees' direct supervisor and coworkers. Supervisors may play an important role in social support by recognizing the subordinate's contribution and expressing interest in the subordinate's well-being. Lack of recognition or interest may lead to forms of counterproductive behaviors. Klotz and Bolino (2013) suggested the view the social, organizational protest, in the form of counterproductive work behaviors, from feelings of resentment perhaps because of organizational constraints, incompetent coworkers, or supervisor treatment.

Biron and Boon (2013) brought attention to the seriousness of employee turnover and intentions to quit because of the likely downturn effects on performance and withdrawal behaviors, such as absenteeism. In the study findings, Biron and Boon (2013) noted that high-performers were sensitive to the supervisor-employee relationship, and low-performers were susceptible to the colleagues-employee relationship; a different pattern from the performance data provided by management and employees. These results may indicate that managers spent more time with low-performers as opposed to high-performers. In both cases, management misses opportunities to influence talent retention while spending time with low-performers, a strategy counter to retain high performers and avoid withdrawal behaviors in the form of absenteeism, and eventually

them leaving the organization. The missed opportunity particularly impacts expatriates who experience withdrawal from their home country and adjustment to the host country. Lee, Veasna, and Wu (2013) found that social support significantly contributes to expatriate adjustment and performance for both deployments to host country and upon return home. Consequently, social support seems to be a contributing factor in employees' work adjustment.

While studying the impact of social influences on employee absenteeism, Dello Russo, Miraglia, Borgogni, and Johns (2013) suggested that absenteeism rates negatively relate to employees' perception of top management and positively related to worker's perception of work colleagues. Diestel et al. (2014) indicated that absenteeism occurrences are highly influenced by social features of work units. These features might be especially true with new employees. In a study of organizational socialization, Kammeyer-Mueller, Wanberg, Rubenstein, and Song (2013) highlighted the importance of repeatedly involving newcomers with coworkers and supervisors as an effective way to adjust to the new environment. Furthermore, Kammeyer-Mueller et al. (2013) found a positive relationship between providing new employees with a positive social experience were less likely to engage in withdrawal behaviors. This social immersion strategy, of assigning experienced colleagues to new hires, seems to provide an accelerated support system for new employees to adapt to the organization, to peers, and to the duties assigned. This accelerated support system to new hires should increase employee confidence, reduce work withdrawal behaviors, and provide understanding on how these strategies could help reduce employee absenteeism.

Duff (2013) studied management use of family-friendly programs and suggested that such programs have an impact on reducing absenteeism. These results provide evidence of the importance of family perceptions of the organization and employees work-related behaviors. Butts et al. (2013) pointed to the importance for organizations to provide family-friendly work-life policies as a vehicle to enhance opportunities for those caring other family members and to promote positive work-related employee outcomes. Süß and Sayah (2013) referenced studies that point out individual employee conflicts occur because of the limited time and energy while serving many social roles. Employees also have roles as parents, siblings, sons or daughters, neighbors, friends, volunteers, members of other groups, etc. These social functions can interfere with an employee's commitment to attend work in any given circumstance and can become a cause of absenteeism. Süß and Sayah noted the work-life balance concept and how work influences family life and when sometimes one might interfere with the other. In contrast, Süß and Sayah also suggested that positive effects are also derived from work-life balance especially when organizations provide supportive policies that promote supportive actions from supervisors, colleagues, and from a flexible working- schedule.

As global competition intensifies, organizations are becoming flatter and management must increasingly rely on their employees to adapt to such pressures; trust becomes an essential element of today's workplace success (Zapata, Olsen, & Martins, 2013). Moreover, Hassan, Wright, and Yukl (2014) brought attention to the characteristics of the ethical leader as trustworthy, caring about followers' well-being, and developing a high –quality relationship with employees who in turn reciprocate

loyalty and commitment to the organization, the group, which likely results in improved attendance. In a study of organizational justice and trust, Zapata et al. (2013) noted the importance of trustworthiness among members of the organization in particular between a supervisor and a subordinate and highlighted the dominant role of the social exchange theory in the justice literature. Zapata et al. (2013) found that employee trustworthiness was an important aspect of supervisor interpersonal and informational justice adherence; influencing a mechanism of social exchange of obligation and trust between supervisor judgment rule adherence, employee perceptions of justice, and serve as antecedents of employee behaviors.

To positively influence to mitigate the social pressures on employees, organizations adopt social support programs. Social support programs refer to those services available to workers that are expected to increase their ability to attend work (Addae et al., 2013). These services could be provided by the U.S. government, care providers, firms, or family members. Social support includes the goal to remove those obstacles preventing employees from going to work or by providing motivation for attendance (Addae et al., 2013). Karatepe and Karadas (2014) found higher levels of absenteeism intent in employees who experienced higher levels of family-work conflict. Kocakulah, Kelley, Mitchell, and Ruggieri (2016) reported that childcare demands were a major source of employees' absenteeism. Organizations could benefit by being informed on their employees' social needs to help employees balance these pressures and minimize their influence on potential workplace absenteeism.

Leadership Dimension

Leadership traits include the association with both positive and negative employee behavior. Therefore, organizational leadership plays a fundamental role for employees by giving direction, conducting evaluations, and serving as coaches (Shoss, Eisenberger, Restubog, & Zagenczyk, 2013). Leaders, in the role of supervisors, provide employees with guidance, feedback, and rewards. Supervisors have the responsibility for their department outcomes, subordinate performance, and behaviors; including dealing with employees' absences. Lechmann and Schnabel (2014) stated that absenteeism events are a pervasive and costly problem for both businesses and society in general by the business productivity losses and by the underutilization of labor.

Employee absenteeism increases the pressure on supervisors and remaining employees both by having to improve their workload pace, redistribute assignments and perhaps, on having to longer hours (Castle, 2013). Managing voluntary absenteeism can improve labor relations between managers and followers by reducing the potential friction caused by making employees work harder or longer. Herzberg (1959) classified the leadership role of supervision as a hygiene factor. This classification, under Herzberg's two-factor theory, implies that quality oversight does not result in high levels of motivation, but its absence would lead to employee job dissatisfaction. According to Krishnan (2012), there is consistent evidence linking how supervisors interact with subordinates and how subordinates respond to their supervisors. Therefore, the quality of the style leadership on supervisors is fundamental to avoid employee dissatisfaction and keep employees at a satisfaction level that would keep them showing up at work.

As one factor influencing employees' absences, researchers continue reporting linkages between absenteeism and leadership. Frooman, Mendelson, and Murphy (2012) indicated that leadership was a determinant at the control of management to address absenteeism behavior. In another study, Jiang (2012) found that immediate supervisor respectful attitude and fair individual treatment toward subordinates can create a high level of employee's perception regarding (a) supervisor trust, (b) organizational commitment, (c) job satisfaction, and (d) control mutuality. Furthermore, Elshout, Scherp, and van der Feltz-Cornelis (2013) identified that employees who felt content and secure with their superiors would provide better service to a customer and would be less likely to be absent. Consequently, employees' perceptions about supervisors' treatment seems to be of importance in an effective strategy on reducing absenteeism.

Abusive supervision. Although considerable research exists linking positive leadership behaviors to follower performance, there is also considerable research demonstrating that some leaders not only do not engage followers positively, but engage in some form of abusive supervision (Martinko, Harvey, Brees, & Mackey, 2013). Camps, Stouten, and Euwema (2016) noted the attention given by researchers on the topic of abusive supervision, making additional reference to the idea of bad bosses. Martinko et al. (2013) stated that there is a considerable amount of research exists focused on the topic of abusive supervision and the negative effects on employees. Abusive supervision is from the normative point of view inappropriate, and may lead to negative outcomes, including employee absenteeism (Palanski, Avey, & Jiraporn, 2014). Employees experiencing abusive supervision on a daily basis are inclined to reduce work

engagement, loss willingness to self-regulate, invest energy in their jobs, avoid work, and engage in job search activities (Barnes, Lucianetti, Bhave, & Christian, 2015; Palanski et al., 2014). These behaviors could be magnified and more commonly seen in organizational departments with tight performance deadlines, such as sales, production, logistics, construction, healthcare, and product development.

Demanding results from followers, such as the manager's job, is not an easy task and often requires demanding and conflicting interactions between the supervisor and the follower. This situation worsens if the leader brings negative attitudes to the interaction such as disregard for the psychological well-being of followers. Basford (2014) indicated that leaders who disregard employees' opinions, ideas, claims, or feedback; create an environment that may place an undue demand on employees which may negatively affect satisfaction, motivation, and commitment. Furthermore, Basford highlighted that leader's transgressions on employees may result on psychological withdraw. Similarly, Martinko et al. (2013) expressed that subordinates who were victims of hostility by their supervisor reacted negatively as they consider this a violation of the social norms of appropriate interpersonal conduct. One can conclude that followers compare regular human interactions to those at work to filter supervisors' communication and treatment and may develop expectations influenced by cultural and social norms. This finding indicated that there is no one way of for leaders to behave and prevent feelings of abusive behavior, but instead, leaders may benefit awareness and adaptability to cultural and social norms to avoid perceptions of maltreatment by followers.

Leaders perceived as abusive by their demanding and pressuring methods may cause employees to respond with equity-restoration behavior, such as absenteeism (Biron & De Reuver, 2013). Furthermore, Shoss et al. (2013) explained that employees who perceive themselves as victims of abusive supervision hold organizations partially responsible. Employees' feelings of mistreatment by their boss and their team would likely not engage and therefore not bring their best work or commitment forward to the jobs. In some occasions, employee victims of abusive supervision would retaliate against the organization based on the mistreatment received by an abusive supervisor (Shoss et al., 2013). The employees' retaliation, according to Shoss et al. could go from simply deciding to disregard bringing positive contributions forward, to job withdrawal, and to behaving negatively toward the organization.

Employees mistreated by abusive supervision also get affected beyond the scope of work, both personally and outside of work. Chi and Liang (2013) reported that followers who are often mistreated by their supervisors more likely experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion at work with lower levels of energy and mental fatigue. In a study linking abusive supervision with work withdrawal, Chi and Liang (2013) found abusive supervision to be not only positively associated with work withdrawal but also with employees' emotional exhaustion. Employees' perceptions of abusive supervision significantly drain subordinates' emotional resources (Chi & Liang, 2013). The continuing emotional drain prevents employees from replenishing emotional resources through other relatively pleasant interactions with their supervisors.

Employees' loss of valued resources, according to Chi and Liang (2013), leave employees with the need to find alternative coping resources such as work withdrawal through engagement of absenteeism. Mackey, Frieder, Perrewé, Gallagher, and Brymer (2015) found abusive supervision behavior to be positively related to coworker-directed deviance behaviors. Mackey et al. studies concluded that abusive supervision promoted the transfer of feelings of unfair work events to even empowered employees, who then promoted further coworker-directed deviance. Employees subject to the job pressure of abusive supervision may be more likely to find absenteeism as a cope vehicle to alleviate from this stressor. Abusive behavior from the supervisor has adverse effects on employees.

As to the overreaching effects of abusive supervision, Camps et al. (2016) emphasized the potential harm to individuals, families, and organizations. Atwater et al. (2016) highlighted that abusive supervision induces employees' work withdrawal behaviors, such as absenteeism, and could result on employees leaving the company. As to amending employees' perception of abusive supervision, Atwater et al. found that 75% of affected employees would have rather gotten an apology or an explanation to improve the situation. Hence, organizations may focus on emotional intelligence training while demanding abusive supervision to stop (Camps et al., 2016). By enhancing emotional intelligence skills, supervisors could be more tactful, less threatening to subordinates, reduce negative perceptions, and help raise morale. This statement is consistent with Herzberg (1959), who found when low morale is present, employees portrayed supervisors as villains. Following Herzberg's two-factor theory, abusive supervision

would create job dissatisfaction and could likely produce negative behaviors such as absenteeism.

Moral leadership. In a study on managers' behavior integrity (BI), Prottas (2013) found BI to be positively related to employees' desired feelings such as job satisfaction, job engagement, health, and life satisfaction; while moral distress was found to be negatively related to these same employees' feelings. Equally important, BI was found to be negatively related to undesirable employees' feelings such as stress, work-to-family conflict, and turnover likelihood; while moral distress was found to be positively related to these same sentiments (Prottas, 2013). Therefore, BI may be a good influence on employee attendance or absence depending on employees' perceptions of the integrity of their reporting supervisors.

The element of trust has been commonly used as a key component to moral leadership. Jaiswal and Dhar (2017) highlighted the importance of leadership trust as a mediator for influencing followers. Jaiswal and Dhar referred to trust as a psychological state of a person who has positive expectations of the leader and is willing to accept vulnerability from the leader's expectation. This level of trust allows organizations and individuals to rely on leaders to make decisions in the interest of the organization and its members.

Chen, Eberly, Chiang, Farh, and Cheng (2014) conducted a study on paternalistic leadership behavior and employee in-role and extra-role behavior using affective trust as the mediating role. Chen et al. found that benevolence and morality showed a positive relationship with employees' in-role and extra-role performance with affective trust

serving as the mediating role. From these results, one can conclude that paternalistic leadership behaviors connect with subordinates in a way that facilitate employees' adoption of extra tasks and efforts. Conversely, Chen et al. (2014) also found that authoritarian leadership behaviors were not significantly related to extra-role behavior, leading to the conclusion that authoritarian leadership could achieve a level of compliance to results but could find it difficult to get extra efforts on performance from employees.

Moral leadership plays a significant role in trust among managers and staff, setting higher standards and expectations among each to the benefit of all involved. Chughtai, Byrne, and Flood (2015) found that the employees trust on leadership fully mediated the effects of ethical leadership and two employees work-related well-being: work engagement and emotional exhaustion. Conversely, employees mistrust on supervisors consumes followers' energy by safeguarding themselves from these untrusted leaders; taking a physical and emotional toll on themselves (Kelloway, Turner, Barling, & Loughlin, 2012). Jordan, Brown, Treviño, and Finkelstein (2013) found employees perceptions of their leader's ethical stature were related to the leader's cognitive moral development. Furthermore, Jordan et al. indicated that effective moral leaders go beyond just reasoning in silence but instead, communicate ethics to subordinates, display fair judgment and care for followers, as well as acting on ethical issues reinforcing good ethical conduct at all levels.

Chughtai et al. (2015) recommended that organizations promote ethical leadership by hiring ethical leaders and training existing ones to foster employees' well-being. In an

investigation of the manager and team influence on absenteeism, Duff et al. (2015) found that managers could influence followers' absenteeism to the degree that the manager's attitude was empathic to the subordinates needs. By contrast, managers stricter on absenteeism rules would experience a decreased influence of the absenteeism norms of the team (Duff et al., 2015). Chughtai et al. (2015) suggested that subordinates that perceived managers with high moral standards as honest, upright, fair, and principle based; thus increasing engagement and morale on their subordinates. Herzberg (1959) found that employees did not mention the supervisor when morale was high. Therefore, under Herzberg's two-factor theory, moral leadership would not necessarily result in motivation, but moral leadership would help avoid job dissatisfaction and its adverse effects on employees' attendance.

Transformational leadership. Transformational leadership theory implies that leaders who gain idealized influence, manifest intellectual stimulation, provide individual consideration, and effectively communicate a vision; inspire followers to look beyond their self-personal interest for the one of the group while experiencing psychological well-being (Kelloway et al., 2012). McCleskey (2014) related transformational leadership to contribute positively to performance, work adjustment, and desired outcomes in international assignments. Frooman et al. (2012) found that when supervisors were perceived as transformational leaders, employees indicated greater satisfaction and less propensity to engage in illegitimate absenteeism. This perception may suggest that transformational leaders inspire their employees to a level of commitment to the team that prevents employees to simply not show up to work for illegitimate causes. By

contrast, Frooman et al. (2012) also found no relationship between transformational leadership and legitimate absenteeism. This lack of association may reflect that employees interpret legitimate causes of absenteeism as nonthreatening to their job security because of the trust element that transformational leaders can embed in subordinates.

Transformational leaders can obtain more work effort out of their followers. Carter, Mossholder, Field, and Armenakis (2014) explained that because followers are in a position of dependence, employees showed appreciation to transformational leaders articulating a compelling vision, inspiring employees to accept work challenges, and displaying personal consideration while dealing with work responsibilities and tasks. Kelloway et al. (2012) highlighted that leaders develop idealized influence by choosing to do what is right over what is expedient based on moral commitment, even at the cost of self-interest, for the benefit of the organization. This idealized influence encourages followers to achieve more than previously believed possible (Kelloway et al., 2012). Followers respond to these leadership behaviors by prioritizing the interest of the group above self-interest resulting in employees being less likely to be absent from work.

Transformational leaders influence followers by engaging in intellectual stimulation of subordinates (Kelloway et al., 2012). Leaders embed in their followers higher levels of expectations while providing guidance to overcome setbacks, question held assumptions, reframe problems in new ways, and make sense of situations (Kelloway et al., 2012); thus effectively shaping the perception of employees regarding job demands (Fernet, Trépanier, Austin, Gagné, & Forest, 2015). According to Fernet et

al. (2015), transformative leaders provide clarification by notifying on issues, addressing questions from employees, and providing help when needed.

McCleskey (2014) highlighted the concepts surrounding transformational leadership and specified trust, team dynamics and performance, adjustments to change, and job satisfaction. Under the intellectual influence of the transformational leader, followers are given the opportunity to make their decisions to overcome setbacks and to build confidence in themselves (Kelloway et al., 2012). Employees' trust and self-worth increase the likelihood of employees feelings of belonging to the organization and less likely to be absent from work.

Kelloway et al. (2012) highlighted that transformational leaders develop a mutually beneficial relationship with their followers. According to Fernet et al. (2015), transformational leaders create an environment where employees perceive good communication, openness to sharing, the autonomy of tasks, and personal recognition from the leader. Kelloway et al. summarized leaders' behavior including serving as ethical role models, being attempted to employees' needs, encouraging employees' independent thinking, motivating a higher level of performance, and gaining employees' trust. Employees, driven by the degree of influence of transformational leaders, would go beyond minimum requirements to comply with the leaders expected demands and could be less likely to engage in voluntary absenteeism.

Leader-member exchange. The leader-member exchange (LMX) is a social exchange theory focuses on the exchange relationship characteristics between the leaders and followers (Kelley & Bisel, 2014). As with social exchange accounts, the reciprocity

norm between employees and organizations applies, when the organization provides proper treatment to its employees, these employees respond with tremendous dedication, effort, and commitment (Eisenberger et al., 2014). There is ample research relating LMX to employees' behaviors positive to the organization (Kelley & Biesel, 2014). The LMX theory includes an exchange between leader and employee through the use of mutual influence that serves to define roles and expectations (Kelley & Biesel, 2014). In the LMX theory, leaders and followers engage at various levels where mutual liking, obligation, and reciprocity characterized a high- quality exchange, and economic exchange based on pay for performance describe a low-quality exchange (Kim, Liu, & Diefendorff, 2015). Eisenberger et al. (2014) found linkages from the formation of quality LMX and employee reduced withdrawal behavior. This relationship may indicate that a high-quality LMX could result in lower voluntary absenteeism.

Employees seek respect for their contributions, and when valued by the leaders, employees perceive the idea of fairness from the leaders (Cornelis, Van Hiel, De Cremer, & Mayer, 2013). When leaders foster empowerment, employees would likely behave with higher levels of satisfaction and commitment (Chughtai et al., 2015). In this relationship effort, Kim et al. (2015) suggested that employees who develop better relationships with supervisors are likely to participate in extra-role behaviors, constructive efforts to engage in improvements and changes, perform better at their jobs, and less likely to be absent. Increased communication with the leader provides certainty to employees' actions positively affecting possible self-doubts and meeting supervisor's expectations.

From the leaders' point of view, Yusof (2016) included the concept of self-regulation of emotions by the leaders and its impact on motivation, because of the shift in focus from what leaders are to what leaders do. Followers' individualized consideration by their next leader provides support, encouragement and empowerment; challenging employees to view problems from different perspectives (Piccolo et al., 2012). Some of these alternative views have to do with peer norm deviant work behaviors, Biron and Bamberger (2012) indicated the degree that leaders are perceived as more supportive, the more likely the employees were to identify with the broader organizational mission and adhere to formal rules. Chughtai et al. (2015) indicated that followers who maintain a positive relationship with superiors demonstrate higher levels of motivation and commitment to perform better. By contrast, Furunes, Mykletun, Einarsen, and Glaso's (2015) study findings supported that employees with low-quality leader-member exchange was associated with negative outcomes such as emotional distress, role conflict, reduced skill utilization, high turnover intention, low levels of job satisfaction, and lack of organizational commitment.

Organizational Dimension

Corporate management provides the elements for employees to conduct business activities on behalf of the firm. These features include work space, equipment, materials, personnel, structure, leadership, and policies; which play critical roles in shaping the work environment and employees' perceptions about their jobs and their organization. As organizational leaders continue to rely more every day on workers to gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace, companies' management need to continue to understand

employees' perceptions and pursue ways to raise loyalty to organizations and their goals (Ng, 2015). Management may promote employee loyalty through organizational support, to enhance employee commitment to the organization as well as to increase personal work effort (Zhu, Hang, Liu, & Lai, 2014). Employees' commitment refers to employees' adherence to company values, culture, and goals, and personal effort refers to employees' commitment to follow company rules and share job experiences with coworkers (Zhu et al., 2014). Dello Russo et al. (2013) indicated that the influence of organizational social interactions on worker absenteeism has been well established. By reinforcing psychological attachments, organizations would be better prepared to raise employees' loyalty and commitment toward the team goals that could result in improved job performance and work attendance.

To achieve high levels of employee loyalty, Ng (2015) argued that organizational leaders need to understand and influence the psychological attachment that binds staff and organizations together. Ng approached these psychological attachment challenges from the organizational trust, identity, and commitment. Organizational trust refers to employees' rational based on the perception of the employees toward the organization's ability to operate, integrity, and trustworthiness (Ng, 2015). Kelley and Bisel (2014) suggested that leadership must take actions that foster an environment of trust and compliance with employees. Ng explained that if employees perceived the organization to be competent then organizational trust was high, and the risk of depending on the company was lower. According to Ng, organizational leaders with high levels of organizational trust from their employees create a psychological attachment where

workers perceive that the organization would fairly and favorably treat them as employees. Furthermore, Ng found that corporate leaders' confidence helped predict employees' positive work behaviors such as involvement, satisfaction, reduction of turnover intentions, and organizational citizenship behaviors. Fostering organizational trust in employees influences multiple expected employee behaviors that may include employee absenteeism.

Organizational identity is another psychological attachment between employees and the organization. Glavas and Godwin (2013) acknowledged that organizational identification is an important concept in organizational behavior, and referred to organizational identification as a psychological linkage that employees hold about their organization. Beyond an only feeling of identity, organizational identification represents employees' sense of oneness with the group (Ng, 2015). According to Ng, employees, who feel a high organizational identification with their employer, experience pride, goal alignment, and congruence of values with the organization. Glavas and Godwin (2013) stated that group affiliation is part of people's self-concept, and employees' perceptions about internal and external perceptions play a crucial role in employees' alignment with the organization. In the case of organizational identification, organizations should promote elements of organizational identification to embed in their employees the feeling of belongings which could reduce voluntary absenteeism behavior.

Organizational support has an effect on employees' organization commitment. Organizational commitment is defined as a measure by which employees identify themselves with their organization (Fu & Deshpande, 2014). Employees with higher

organizational commitment have better job performance while sharing company values (Fu & Deshpande, 2014). This higher level of commitment may influence employees' behavior toward controllable absenteeism. Palmer, Komarraju, Carter, and Karau (2017) highlighted the relationship between employees with positive and negative perceptions of organizational support. Palmer et al. further explained that if the employees' perception of organizational support was positive, the employee was less likely to be absent than if the perception was negative. Hassan et al. (2014) highlighted the role organizational leaders must have to provide employees with adequate organizational support resulting in higher commitment which is associated with lower levels of employees' withdrawal behaviors, such as absenteeism.

Mitonga-Monga and Cilliers (2016) pointed to the need to look at organizational commitment from the following three facets: the affective, the normative, and the continuance commitment constructs. Consequently, Meyer, Morin, and Vandenberghe (2015) defined affective commitment as a set of employees positive feelings toward the organization; reflecting in the staff work involvement and sense of identification with the company. This type of commitment involves feelings of belonging through employee identification with the organization and includes an emotional context. Meyer et al. referred to normative commitment as the employees' sense of obligation toward the company. In this case, the source of the commitment comes from the formal agreement, similar as those felt from a contractual arrangement. Finally, Meyer et al. described continuance commitment as the employees' willingness to stay in the company when evaluating the costs of departing from the enterprise. On this last form of commitment,

the source is the high perceived economic tradeoff by the employee in case of leaving to another job. Relevant to the topic of employee absenteeism, David and Holladay (2015) referred to less committed workers to experience worsening levels of withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism. This relationship suggests that firms that invest on employee commitment should experience less absenteeism than those who do not.

Demirtas and Akdogan (2015) noted that researchers have defined organizational commitment in multiple terms. One term is affective commitment. Demirtas and Akdogan referred to affective commitment as a personal binding with the employee's organizational values, culture, goals, and with the willingness to exert effort while maintaining membership in the organization. Another term is called continuance organizational commitment. Panaccio, Vandenberghe, and Ben Ayed (2014) referred to continuance organizational commitment as the employees' perceived costs, both in monetary and recognition, for leaving the organization. Regardless of the source of commitment, supervisors need to assess employees continuously and create conditions to improve commitment. In a study of reciprocal supervisor-subordinate commitment and job performance, Gosselin et al. (2013) reported that affective commitment as underlying factor influencing employee absenteeism. Therefore, employee commitment seems to be an important consideration to the study on the topic of employee absenteeism and strategies to reduce employees' absences.

Albrecht (2012) noted that multiple aspects of the organizational culture were directly and positively associated with some conditions, such as commitment and extra-role behavior. These positive organizational conditions promote employee engagement

and company performance. By contrast, organizational leaders who fail to earn the trust of employees run the risks of consequently producing employee disengagement and emotional exhaustion, linked to increasing of absenteeism and other job deviant behaviors (Chughtai et al., 2015). Companies realize that to obtain a more productive engaged workforce with better attendance, they must promote trust and harmonious relationships among employees and their leaders (Shantz & Alfes, 2015).

One model is the employee-organization relationship which confronts employees' work-life conflicts by relying on a set of initiatives that includes transformational leadership, procedural justice, and family-supportive initiatives to deal with conflicts and influence employees' perceptions of the organization (Jiang, 2012). Testing the employee-organization relationships (EOR) model, Jiang's (2012) results suggested that the perceived amount of work-life conflicts predicts the perceived quality of EORs, and when employees recognized that their organizations treated them fairly, the organization would be considered to have taken positive steps to improving the relationship with their employees. Meyer et al. (2015) suggested that organizations have some control over how employees commit to the organization. Furthermore, Meyer et al. indicated that organizations which positively shape organizational support benefited from a more stable employee membership. Both of these employees feelings would tend to indicate a favorable effect on voluntary absenteeism.

Castle (2013) stated that the policy options available to address employee turnover were also likely to address absenteeism. Emery (2010) suggested replacing the traditional structures that result in turned off employees and absenteeism with current

structures that produce intrinsic motivation. The structures that turned off employees are those in the organization that exposes employees to the following: little intellectual satisfaction; high levels of negative emotions and experiences leading to anger, frustration, low motivation, and sick leave; weak mental and low work demand of someone of greater capabilities, leading to a poor sense of achievement; treated as machine instead of people and promoting a high sense of replaceability (Emery, 2010). Emery proposed a set of criteria to overcome these adverse effects. Emery proposed six criteria's include the following: (a) decision making autonomy, (b) continual learning in combination with some room to set goals and provide performance feedback in a timely and accurate basis, (c) variety of assignments and tasks, (d) mutual support and respect, (e) opportunities to conduct work that is meaningful by providing something of social value where employees understand their individual contribution, and (f) an attractive desirable future. Emery suggested that organizations need to move from the paradigm that employees are mainly concerned with money, getting ahead, and interpersonal relationships; and move toward what the data suggest is critical: exciting and challenging jobs that help provide a decent quality of life.

Other approaches to organizational commitment include the issues of values, both from the employee and the organization. Bergman, Benzer, Kabins, Bhupatkar, and Panina (2013) proposed that potential and current employees' values should be screened to evaluate and determine their personal fit or misfit based on organizational events. A misfit on values would probably not yield organizational commitment from the employees and could result in chronic voluntary absenteeism. For example, people who

pursue the protection of animals would probably not commit to an organization that slaughters cattle, vegetarians would probably not connect or commit to a meat processing plant, and environmental activists would have many difficulties working for an oil exploration and drilling company. In a study that examined how the respect for authority moderated affective organizational commitment, Newman and Sheikh (2012) found that employees with low traditionalism exhibited higher levels of emotional attachment to the organization when these employees had autonomy and sense of satisfaction with their supervisor; top traditional employees displayed elevated levels of affective commitment even if autonomy and perception of supervision were low. Therefore, employee values, and especially those new to the organization, could provide an insight into strategies seeking employee commitment toward attendance and absenteeism.

Cultural Dimension

Absenteeism is a worldwide phenomenon of the workplace. Nevertheless, not many cross-cultural studies on absenteeism, nor they illustrate their potential perspective (Addae et al., 2013). Employee absenteeism has shown to be relevant across different countries where causes even include sporting events such as the international cricket championship, the Olympics, the soccer World Cup, and the beginning of hunting season in the United States (Patton & Johns, 2012). Addae et al. (2013) found significant differences in the perceived legitimacy, responses to absence situations, and self-reported absence across countries. In a study of Turkish employees, Uçanok (2016) found that work centrality had a positive mediating role between the relationship between affective commitment and work alienation. Biron and Karanika-Murray (2014) referred to the use

of a psychological safety climate (PSC) as a construct to help organizations reflect on their philosophy and priority between the psychological health of employees and production related objectives. By promoting participation, communication, and consultation, this useful measurement implies to help to take a read and allow the organization to respond before stress takes over and affect employees' attendance and organizational performance.

Legitimacy. One important cultural factor has to do with the employee perception of legitimacy of absenteeism (Addae et al., 2013). From the group legitimacy perspective, ten Brummelhuis, Johns, Lyons, and ter Hoeven (2016) described employees' perceptions of absences legitimacy to be influenced by coworkers' absence behavior norms. Furthermore, ten Brummelhuis et al.(2016) found that in addition to team norms, employees are also influenced by the level of cooperation among the team to decide on whether or not being absent. Employees may consider some socially accepted legitimate reasons to be absent from work, including being sick, jury duty, and others. These reasons are often considered not to be under the control of the employee and often called involuntary absenteeism. From an opposite and less legitimate point of view, there is voluntary absenteeism which is when employees miss work for causes under employee's control. David and Holladay (2015) suggested that employee voluntary absenteeism may be a way to compensate times of unchanged salaries, lack of bonuses, or increases in job scope without reward or recognition. Biron and Bamberger (2012) found that group norms influence absenteeism behavior mediated by organizational leadership. Based on a study of ethical leadership and organizational commitment, Mitonga-Monga and Cilliers

(2016) reported that employees who perceived their leaders' behavior to be ethical were more committed to the organization and less likely to experience absenteeism than those employees from those perceived as lesser ethical organizations. This employee view indicated that the perception of ethical behavior from companies may play a role in employees' decisions to engage in voluntary absenteeism.

Coworkers create conditions of permissive group absenteeism norms in the absence of consistent signals from organizational leaders (Biron & Bamberger, 2012). Biron and Bamberger (2012) explained that under the lack of definition of the organization about when attendance is required, employees rely on absence group norms and interpret the legitimacy of absenteeism based on a peer-based sense-making process. This sense-making indicated that peer perception of absenteeism legitimacy plays an important role for businesses when attempting to influence absenteeism behavior. Duff et al. (2015) noted that absence group norms affect employee absenteeism behavior based on the positive or negative experience of others' absences. Biron and Bamberger explained that the degree of permissiveness or strictness of absent group norms influence employees' legitimacy perceptions toward absenteeism by either framing absenteeism as a necessary or as a less legitimate response.

Absenteeism includes the traditional view as an individual problem to be managed because of its economic implications. Nevertheless, recently absenteeism research has shifted focus to behavior legitimacy as an alternative approach. Absenteeism behavior legitimacy is viewed as an outcome of organizational permissiveness under

conditions of low supervisory support, where employees adopt peer group norms in response to aversive organizational conditions (Biron & Bamberger, 2012).

Time orientation. Addae et al. (2013) indicated that most nations organize activities focused primarily to comply with cycles of work organization; leaving family and social time to be scheduled out of extra time out of work. Zhang (2015) indicated that concepts of time differed among cultures and people, and can be differentiated by either as monochronic or as polychronic. Monochronic refers to those people who tend to do one thing at a time, carefully plan their schedule, view time as money, emphasize on promptness, and take schedules and deadlines seriously (Addae et al., 2013). By contrast, polychronic refers to those people who tend to do multiple activities at a time, perceive time as a free good, change plans easily and often; viewing commitments as something to strive for if possible (Zhang, 2015). Addae et al. (2013) indicated that polychronic people tend to have less concern about time and therefore are more likely to be late or absent. Gimenez-Nadal and Molina (2015) found differences on how individuals from different nations allocate time among work, sleep, personal care, leisure activities, and other personal needs. Therefore, employees' cultural time allocation values could provide understanding to absenteeism and strategies to manage it.

Locus of control. Caliendo, Cobb-Clark, and Uhlendorff (2015) referred to the locus of control as to the degree that individuals tend to believe or justify their behavior to either external environmental factors or themselves. Locus of controls can be described as internal or external. Addae et al. (2013) reported that internal locus of control negatively related to being absent at work. Therefore, employees with an internal locus of

control perceived more behavioral self-control and would be less likely to experience absenteeism. By contrast, people with external locus of control were more likely to engage in long-term absenteeism (Vlasveld et al., 2013). Therefore, employees could likely have different absenteeism attitude behaviors based on their locus of control perceptions.

This literature review reveals various aspects of the current stage of research on the topic of employee absenteeism. I provided a critical analysis and synthesis of the foundation for the question of absenteeism. In order to organize the questions, the topic was divided into influential factors based on the following dimensions: (a) Individual, related to the employees internal factors; (b) social, covering those aspects surrounding the employees both internal and external to the organization; (c) leadership, reviewing those related to the employees' supervisors influences; (d) organizational, involving those aspects that the organization influence as a whole; and (e) cultural, relating to the collective beliefs, customs, and traditions, affecting employees absenteeism. I also provided an analysis and synthesis of the Herzberg (1959) two-factor theory which serves as the study's conceptual framework. These broad themes set the stage for this research into exploring effective strategies crafted to reduce production line employee absenteeism for U.S. operations within the maquila industry of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

Summary

Employee absenteeism places a burden on organizations to effectively deliver products and services to customers globally while avoiding an increase in operating costs. Mexico's manufacturing sector employee are absent over 82.5 million work hours

annually at an estimated cost on wages of \$266 million a year (National Institute of Statistics, 2016). Consequently, Frooman et al. (2012) indicated the important need to control worker absenteeism in order to survive the ever increasing competitive environment. Employees who do not show up to work inflict business challenges such as potential disruptions, reduction of productivity, and conflict among attending employees and supervisors.

In this qualitative research case study, I explored effective strategies for management to deal with employees' absenteeism. To provide a conceptual framework to explore absenteeism strategies, I chose the Herzberg (1959) two-factor theory. Herzberg identified hygiene factors and motivational factors as the two factors to consider under his theory. Hygiene factors include those that organizations must have in place to prevent employees' dissatisfaction (Herzberg et al., 1959). By contrast, according to Herzberg, motivational factors include those that influence employees' higher levels of performance. For the topic of employees' absenteeism, Herzberg et al. (1959) highlighted the influence that these two factors play on employee attendance behavior.

The review of the literature reflects that the challenge of employees' absenteeism should be looked from multiple perspectives. Ramzan et al. (2013) found multiple themes related to employees' absenteeism, such as job stress, workload, family-work-conflict, as well as employee-turnover. The themes were presented into different dimensions and included: individual employee, social, leadership, organizational, and cultural dimensions.

On the individual dimension, Addae et al. (2013) referenced to historical evidence that places the absenteeism challenge from the individual worker point of view. This individual dimension included emotional elements, stress, engagement, happiness, job satisfaction, and other individual characteristics that influence employees' absences. Social dimension aspects also intervene in the evaluation of worker absenteeism. Biron and Boom (2013) noted employees' sensitivity toward relationships dynamics at the workplace including both with supervisors as well as with coworkers. The leadership dimension perspective also provided insights into employee absenteeism behavior. In line with other researchers' findings, Hassan et al. (2014) highlighted the link between ethical leadership behavior and employee absenteeism behavior. In this leadership component, the literature covered the topics of abusive supervision, moral leadership, transformational leadership, and leader-member exchange. The organizational dimension refers to those components of organizational support as perceived by employees which influences employees' identification with the organization, linked to reducing the likelihood of employee absences (Fu & Deshpande, 2014). Finally, the literature closes with cultural dimension which highlights employees' absenteeism behavior differences among countries as well as cultures. Addae et al. found significant differences in employees' perceptions and responses toward absenteeism. The cultural dimension included: legitimacy, time orientation, locus of control as perceived by employees.

Section 1 included the foundations for this study. Dealing with employees' absenteeism is a burden in organizations everywhere. The answer to what strategies managers use to help reduce employee absenteeism is of value to organizations and their

leadership. In Section 2, I covered the proposal research, including my role as a researcher, methodology, design, data collection, data organization, analysis, techniques, as well as the ethical component to ensure a quality research. In Section 3, I included the findings of the field research. In addition, the application to professional practice, the implication for social change, recommendations for action and future research, as well as some reflections on the study, conclusion, and the appendices.

Section 2: The Project

Using a multiple case study approach, I explored effective strategies managers use to reduce maquiladora employee absenteeism in Mexico. In turn, managers may gain understanding to sustain organizational operational capacity, improve labor costs, and better predict the achievement of organizational goals. The focus of this exploratory case study was to gain in-depth information on strategies managers use to reduce employee absenteeism. The goal was to explore strategies used by business managers that have been effective in reducing employee absenteeism. I collected data by conducting semistructured interviews with members of management who have personally participated in the implementation of strategies that have resulted in decreasing employee absenteeism. I also collected data from organizational documents and archival records. Understanding effective strategies to reduce employee absenteeism may help maquiladora management achieve operational goals. In Section 2, I present the purpose statement, role as a researcher, participants, research method, research design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection, data technique, data organization technique, data analysis, confirmability, dependability, credibility, and transferability.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive multiple case study research was to explore what effective strategies operational managers use to reduce employee absenteeism. The targeted population included managers from six U.S. companies in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, maquila operations. In addition, I sought secondary data, such as company documentation and archival data to explore strategies to reduce employee

absenteeism used by managers. The findings from this study may contribute to social change by expanding organizational understanding of the factors that contribute to employee absenteeism of line-employees and effective strategies operational managers can use to help reduce employee absenteeism.

Role of the Researcher

In my role as a researcher, I served as the main instrument for data collection and established the seminal literary review for the study. Peredaryenko and Krauss (2013) highlighted the critical role of the researcher as an instrument to gather and analyze the themes to produce meaningful findings in qualitative research. Within the scope of the data collection, I had the responsibility for searching, selecting, and inviting companies to allow the conduction of a research study and the recruitment of participants. Conrad et al. (2013) highlighted the importance of verbal attributes of the interviewer during the invitation to participate and the decision to participate or not. I conducted interviews to gain answers and interpret them to identify practical strategies to reduce employees' absenteeism. My responsibility as a researcher also included the use of ethical standards at the time of obtaining the right authorizations. I adopted the elements of the Belmont Report. I ensured proper conduction of procedures during the recording and documentation of information, confidentiality of the source, and storage of documentation for a 5-year period.

During my professional experience, I have performed multiple roles in the management of operations, including production, quality control, warehouse, logistics, and plant management. During those experiences, I have noticed high rates of employee

absenteeism and the impact employees not showing up for work has on the organizations' ability to get the expected results and keep costs low. I have witnessed many attempts to understand and deal with the employee absenteeism problem. My background with witnessing employee absenteeism was one of the factors that influenced the selection of this research topic. A scholarly investigation on understanding strategies dealing with employee absenteeism can shed light on the appropriate direction for practitioners to follow to solve this long-standing business problem.

My role as a researcher for this study entailed the responsibility of designing, planning, and conducting all aspects of the research study. My responsibilities included the development of the interview questions, analyzing the data, developing the interpretations, and drawing the conclusions based on the data. I conducted all these tasks while ensuring that ethical expectations were met, putting aside personal biases from all aspects of the data collection, transcription, analysis, as well as from the reports and findings.

Participants

The selection of who to include in the study and how many participants to include seemed to be a key issue for effectively achieving the goals of any study. Roy, Zvonkovic, Goldberg, Sharp, and LaRossa (2015) highlighted the importance of sample size decision and selection of participants as not only an issue of meeting target numbers but also as key determinants of the projects' integrity to the goals, depth of data collected and fit with theory.

The target participants for this study included operational managers from U.S. organizations with sorting or manufacturing operations in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Qualitative researchers seek multiple participants to gain different points of view on the research topic (Houghton et al., 2013; Wolgemuth et al., 2015; Zhang, 2015). First, I accessed contact information for potential U.S. companies through business listings from the Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, Maquila Association. Then I contacted potential companies based on company name recognition and number of employees to gain an appointment to discuss the study and potential participation.

I sought two qualified management participant for each of the six organizations included in the study. The sample size for adequacy of data in qualitative studies does not depend on the number of participants but instead on the sufficient quality information to address the research question (Levitt, Motulsky, Wertz, Morrow, & Ponterotto, 2017). For example, Peredaryenko and Krauss (2013) used four participants in a qualitative study, achieved data saturation, and presented valid conclusions in their study. In this case study, I interviewed a total of 11 qualified participants or until I reached data saturation. I included a member from operations and another from HR to get a broader strategic managerial perspective. When seeking a high degree of certainty, the number of case participants should be five or more (Yin, 2014). One group of potential qualified participants was the plant managers who have overall responsibility for the operation. The second group of potential qualified participants was the HR managers who have the responsibility of monitoring and helping manage the employee absenteeism process.

Another group included the first-line managers who deal with consequences of absent employees.

The qualitative researcher must seek participants with the best knowledge about the research problem to ensure quality of data within interview responses (Saunders & Townsend, 2016). Acharya, Prakash, Saxena, and Nigam (2013) indicated that the convenient selection of study participants is the most common method in many qualitative studies. Palinkas et al. (2015) explained that the selection process to identify those participants with information-rich knowledge is widely used in qualitative research. I selected the first invitation respondents from each organization as participants in the study.

After obtaining Walden University IRB approval, I contacted the organizations to obtain a signed letter of cooperation and afterward contacted participants to explain and agree on the terms of the interview. With prior e-mail approval from participants, I set location, date, and time for the meeting to conduct the interview (see Appendix A). Researchers face multiple ethical challenges while conducting data collection and reporting on study results (Pinsky, 2015; Yilmaz, 2013). Yin (2014) referenced the importance of protecting human subjects in case studies between the design approval and the start of data collection. The interviewee confirmed the confidentiality / consent forms to adhere to ethical standards and give way to the data collection initiation. Then, I began the interview (see Appendix A).

To establish working relations with the participants, I first contacted a member of top management or a representative of their organization's HR department to ask for

permission to conduct the research. It is important for organizations and researchers to rely on interviews and develop a working relation to comprehend situations and outcomes (Anyan, 2013; Pinsky, 2015). Furthermore, it is important for the interviewer to be prepared in terms of grasping the material investigated, asking good questions, being a good listener, and holding back preconceived notions to avoid biases (Yin, 2014). Therefore, to obtain access and develop working relationships, I had to master the material on the topic and conducted myself in a professional manner to seek the required approvals. Upon obtaining approval, I requested a complete list of all members of management with their contact information such as telephone numbers and e-mail accounts to draw the participant sample. From the personal contact information that was provided, I selected the two respondents per organization, one from operations and one from HR, as study participants from the total population provided by each organization. The personal information was available; I sought e-mails to contact all managers to draw the participants from.

I gained access to participants by formal communication via e-mail, phone, and in person. Conrad et al. (2013) warned about the proper use of voice, speech, and interactions, critical in the interviewee's decision to participate or not in the interview. Wolgemuth et al. (2015) suggested to use an interactive social nature of the interview and to adapt to the interviewee's style to be more conducive to connect and carry out better interactions. I sought participant's interest in taking part in this study by explaining the relevance of the problem as well as highlighting their potential contribution to the doctoral research study.

The knowledge communication between the interviewer and the interviewee is an important way to shape the exchange and connect with the expert's professional system of relevance (Littig and Pöchhacker, 2014). In addition, I provided the assurance of their confidentiality. It is important to aim at the highest ethical standards while conducting research by following ethical practices, gaining informed consent, and protecting participants' confidentiality (Yin, 2014). I explained the details of the scholarly purpose of the research and the confidentiality of their answers to participants. Interviewers must ensure confidentiality of participants' responses to protect them as participants and to obtain richer descriptions and detailed accounts during the interview (Lancaster, 2016; Sanjari, et al., 2014). This participant selection approach allowed me to access targeted management participants to explore the participants' experience at implemented effective strategies aimed to reduce employee absenteeism.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

Finding answers to the problem of employee absenteeism and organizational strategies that reduce the absenteeism behavior were the main drivers of this research. I pursued answers to the question of what strategies managers can use to help reduce employee absenteeism. For this purpose, I selected the qualitative research method approach. Qualitative research consists of researchers, as the primary data collection entity, placing themselves in the investigated environment to register observations and experiences, bringing their own set of predispositions, assumptions, and beliefs (Anyan, 2013; Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013; Sanjari et al., 2014). In addition, whether

consciously or not, researchers bring their predisposition and beliefs which may be in line, or not with participants' points of view (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). Yilmaz (2013) described qualitative research as a developing, expositive, meaning seeking, and natural approach to the study of descriptive lived experiences as shared by those participants profiled and included in a study. I conducted a qualitative method study to gain more detailed descriptions, meanings, and understandings from particular managers' testimonies about different strategies used to reduce employees' absenteeism.

Following the qualitative method, I was able to conduct interviews with managers to explore their experiences in designing, deploying, and evaluating employee absenteeism reduction strategies. Interviews are a popular choice in social science research (Littig & Pöchhacker, 2014), because interviews are considered the most common source of producing knowledge in qualitative studies (Pinsky, 2015). Wolgemuth et al. (2015) indicated that by capturing experiences through participants' testimonies, researchers can interpret meaning and understanding of the phenomenon under study. I recorded interviewee experts' answers and impressions about what strategies influence the role that supervisors, organizations, coworkers, family members, policies, and cultural aspects have on the employees' decision to be absent at work.

The quantitative method was not adequate to provide accurate insights into the different strategic issues that influence employees not to be absent from work for the production line employee population. Using quantitative methods would have involved using a limited instrument based survey questions based on a presumed theory, providing only statistical relational analysis based on the selected theory about this population.

Yilmaz (2013) favored the qualitative over the quantitative methodology when pursuing descriptions of personal experience using a more profound and meaningful questioning.

Quantitative methods are deductive in nature and are used to test a theory.

Researchers use quantitative methods to fulfill the need for more rigorous collection of numerical data and statistical evidence. In addition, quantitative methods are narrow, concise, and objective, in the disciplined following of the research design and statistical analysis (Simon & Goes, 2013). For this reason, the use of quantitative methods could not have helped answer to the research questions that formed the foundation for this study. For the same inadequacy of the quantitative method, the mixed methods design was also not appropriate.

To provide the best research results, I decided to use a purposeful selection of interview participants to obtain in-depth insights and to answer the research question (Palinkas et al., 2015). Concurrently, Houghton et al. (2013) highlighted the fact that researchers have increased flexibility when using qualitative method over the quantitative method by not having preconceived hypotheses and allowing in-depth interviews with participants about their personal experience. The qualitative method met the need of this study to pursue rich, deep, managers' narrative descriptions of their experiences managing employee absenteeism strategy that discourages employees to be absent from work.

Research Design

The particular research design selected for this study was the case study approach. A qualitative research method with a case study design supports the ability to pursue the

knowledge of an organizational phenomenon (Yin, 2014). The case study research design allows researchers to understand a complex social phenomenon in this case, employee absenteeism (Yin, 2014). Case study research best suits studies that pursue answers to questions related to how and why within real-life context (De Massis and Kotlar, 2014). The case study method is a descriptive research strategy based on a real-life situation with limits set by the researcher (Simon and Goes, 2013). Researchers prefer the case study design when examining contemporary events requiring two sources of evidence (Yin, 2014)

In this study, I used interviews of manager participants and secondary documentation and archives from U.S. operations in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico for the two data sources. These two sources of data provided me with enough evidence to make evidential support inferences about strategies that help organizations reduce employee absenteeism. Simon and Goes (2013) pointed out that in case studies, the researcher analyzes the data using inductive logic to uncover the reality behind the data collected to explain a social phenomenon.

Other qualitative research designs were not as relevant to address the research question as the case study research design. The narrative design approach is used to study someone's life or an event. According to Petty et al. (2012) the narrative design uses personal accounts and stories from one or two individuals to explore the life of a person or an event in a chronological setting. As a result, the narrative design did not provide enough scope to address the research question.

By contrast, the phenomenological design is used to focus on understanding the essence of life experiences. Moustakas (1994) defined the goal of a phenomenological study as a research design that helps provide a comprehensive description of an experience from the words and meanings described by those who lived the experience. Petty et al. (2012) explained that the phenomenological design is used to understand the universal meaning of a phenomenon by researching the previous experiences of participants. In this case, the phenomenological approach could not address the understanding of effective organizational strategies dealing with employee absenteeism.

The grounded theory design uses the data collected to help develop a theory. Grounded theory design goes beyond the mere descriptions to pursue further insights into a phenomenon and its context by using inductive examinations (Corley, 2015; Wolfswinkel et al., 2013). This grounded theory approach was not suitable because current theories exist related to employee absenteeism. In addition, I could not use grounded theory to provide specific answers to what strategies work within a set of U.S. operations within the maquila industry in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

The ethnography design uses descriptions and interpretations of a homogeneous cultural group. Kriyantono (2012) indicated that the ethnography design focus on interpreting cultural aspects of a common culture over extended periods of time in their natural setting. In this case, the study pursues strategies working with issues that go beyond cultural bounds. For this reason, the ethnography design would not be adequate to inquiry the understanding of procedures current addressing the challenges of employee absenteeism. In summary, the use of the case study research design was the most

appropriate. Therefore, the use of other alternative qualitative design approaches would not provide in-depth understanding about current effective organizational strategies working to reduce line-employee absenteeism among a set of U.S. operations in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

Population and Sampling

The population selected for the study represented managers who have the responsibility for overseeing the design, deployment, or review of strategies with the purpose of reducing line-worker absenteeism in U.S. operational settings within Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. The participants to be included in the sample were composed of HR, operational, and plant managers from selected organizations. Benoot, Hannes, and Bilsen (2016) indicated the importance of choosing participants with experience in the research topic. In this case study, I selected sample participants based on their exposure and familiarity on the implementation of strategies to help reduce employee absenteeism. For this study, the participants needed to meet the following criteria, they must (a) belong to an organization from the manufacturing and processing industry; (b) must have management experience with the development, communication, or deployment of strategies to help reduce employee absenteeism in their organization; and (c) be a leader for at least one year with the participating organization. Elo et al. (2014) supported the idea of researchers providing a brief description of the selection of participants, as well as to the selection criteria to strengthen the trustworthiness of the results.

Within the population sample, at least two managers from the three functional groups identified within six organizations were included. Roy et al. (2015) proposed the

idea of engaging in depth with a smaller number of participants instead of aiming for a larger number of them could provide more insightful data into the complexities of a qualitative topic. For this qualitative method and case study research design study, the sample size selected was of 11 participants. According to Yin (2014), a case study sample size is more a judgmental discretionary call, rather than a fix designation or calculation. Britten, Garside, Pope, Frost, and Cooper (2017) indicated that there was little consensus on sample size for qualitative studies. Nevertheless, Britten et al. made reference to sample sizes from more than six to 100 participants as an acceptable range in qualitative studies, but stressed the importance of getting enough data to synthesize and explain the data. The essential aspect of sample size is that the participating interviewees provide the opportunity to identify enough themes to where no additional themes emerge and one can make sense of the data from the cases selected (Britten et al., 2017). Therefore, I interviewed a total of 11 management participants from six participating U.S. maquila plants in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

In addition to the selected number of participants, Marshall et al. (2013) suggested bringing additional participants continually to the interview process to the point of gathering enough data to perform the study. Tran, Porcher, Tran, and Ravaud (2017) indicated that, for qualitative research, the sample size depends on multiple factors and therefore, the number of participants should be large enough to reach data saturation. Marshall et al. (2013) referred to the data saturation point at the level when the data collection stops adding new content. Likewise, Houghton et al. (2013) referred to data saturation as the point where no new concepts emerged. Therefore, data saturation served

as the limit point where no other participant is needed. Eleven participants allowed reaching the saturation point in data collection for this qualitative case study design.

To gain access to topic knowledgeable participants that met selection criteria, the study used non probabilistic purposeful selection sampling. Researchers choose the purposeful selection sampling method when the study requires sample participants who conform to the selected criteria and therefore need to be represented in the final sample (Robinson, 2014; Roy et al., 2015). Elo et al. (2014) highlighted that purposeful sampling is an appropriate qualitative research sampling to pursue participants who possess the best knowledge concerning the research topic. In this case, the purposeful sampling ensured that the sample complied with the participant study criteria.

As to the selection of industries and organizations, I based my selection on their reputation in the market as a leader in employee relations. For this reason, I decided not to choose other qualitative research non-probabilistic sampling methods, such as convenience, quota, and snowball sampling methods because of their inapplicability to answer the research question. The convenience sampling method was discarded because this design only selects participants based on their mere availability and may disregard their knowledge and experience on the topic expertise. Palinkas et al. (2015) attested that by just collecting information from easily available participants would not be in line with identifying information-rich participants knowledgeable about the phenomenon of research interest. Due to the nature of being accidental or opportunistic, convenience samples provided some potential pitfalls that could likely generate a bias on the responses and potentially undermine the results of the study (Tyrer & Heyman, 2016). Under

convenience sampling, available participants could lack experience in managing employee absenteeism; making the participant ineligible to participate in the study by, not meeting the participant criteria of knowing about effective employee absenteeism strategies.

In this study, the research question focuses the attention on effective strategies that influence the reduction of employee absenteeism and makes no attempt to be representative of the whole population. Therefore, a quota sampling was not selected because this sampling design addresses the needs for quantitative studies to seek similar proportion than the population represented (Zheng, Cai, & Pepe, 2013). From the qualitative perspective, snowball sampling can be used to get initial study participants to refer later participants willing to take part in the study (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). In this case, I did not choose snowball sampling method because the sample selection depends on the initial participants to provide following participants. Instead, I chose to select topic experienced management participants. Therefore, the study included purposeful sampling to ensure that all participants include previous experiences overseeing the strategy to help reduce employee absenteeism and can provide personal testimony about policies and practices that influence their employee's decision to be absent from work.

The interview setting to conduct the data collection for the study was in a place agreed by both the participant and I, which offered comfort to the interviewee, allowed for audio recording, and with minimal distractions. Lau et al. (2016) highlighted the face-to-face data collection premise of being conducted on a private setting that would allow the participant to respond accurately and thoughtfully. From another perspective,

researchers also suggest that the interviewers should get participants at ease, develop a rapport, earn their trust, and choose an environment where voice can be heard (Gesch-Karamanlidis, 2015; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). The optional settings options included the participant's office, their conference rooms, a public coffee shop, a public library, among others. I asked participants to select a setting where they could be comfortable, that minimized interruptions, allowed for audio recording, and fitted their schedule. I scheduled a 60 minutes period for each interview.

Ethical Research

To ensure the ethical protection of participants, I sought and obtained the authorization of the Walden University IRB before the conduction of this research. Walden University's IRB approval number for this study is 04-21-17-0359137, and it expires on April 20th, 2018. IRBs include definition as committees whose purpose is to perform ethical reviews of research proposals (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1979). Morrow (2015) highlighted the importance of having an independent review by a committee or institution when human participants are involved. Furthermore, Adams et al. (2015) indicated that the IRB plays an important role by reviewing research proposals and approving protocols before the conduction of the actual data gathering.

I followed ethical considerations to protect the rights of participants throughout all phases of the study, including: (a) before conducting the study, (b) at the beginning of the study, (c) while collecting data, (d) during the analysis of data, (e) preparing the report of findings, and (f) publishing the study. Consequently, the ethical framework and customs of Mexico were also considered in the conduction of this study. From the ethical

point of view, Mexico follows similar ethical standards as those applied by the United States; where research practice follows ethical and moral dimensions above technical methodological requirements, and where the wellbeing of participants supersedes the academic and scientific goals (Noreña, Alcaraz-Moreno, Rojas, & Rebolledo-Malpica, 2012).

By following the IRB guidelines, I complied with the ethical requirements for the United States as well as for Mexico. Adams et al. (2015) noted the importance of taking into account ethics in developing countries as well as a reasonable notion that ensures the quality as well as the respect and value of individual participants. From a Mexico custom point of view, I conducted myself in a very professional manner reflected in the way I dress, speak, and use of body language. I used some small talk communication to ease any tension or nervousness in the interviewee, avoiding anything that may be interpreted as leading toward an opinion in the topic.

Before and during the research, I followed Walden University ethical requirements. Liaw and Tam (2015) supported the importance of framing and embedding ethical issues from the beginning of the research process. Via e-mail, I had all willing participants understand and sign the consent form before participating in the study. Haahr, Norlyk, and Hall (2014) encouraged researchers to invite participants by addressing questions regarding research purpose, form, and content. This form of engagement results in informed participants having a good understanding of the research and with adequate information to sign and agree with the informed consent. An informed consent by the participant along with an independent review is considered one of the

cornerstones of ethical research (Morrow, 2015). Harkins et al. (2015) suggested that all aspects of the research be disclosed to participants.

To avoid biases, I offered no incentives to participants to take part in the study. Sanjari et al. (2014) emphasized the importance for researchers to minimize the possibility of intrusion into the interviewees' response autonomy of the study. It is important to have willing, but at the same time, unbiased participation of interviewees. Many interviewees consider participation in research studies that would benefit individuals, organizational groups, or society in general (Sanjari et al., 2014). Therefore in the data collection, I asked participants to discuss effective strategies they use to help reduce employee absenteeism and its potential organizational and business leader benefits.

I advised participants that they may stop the interviews and withdraw from the study at any time by informing me of their desire to end participation in the study. Haahr et al. (2014) referred to the principle of respect for the autonomy of interviewees regarding voluntary participation and to continue with unwilling participants would be a violation of this principle. Morrow (2015) explained that during the informed consent process, participants must be competent, fully informed, and not be subject to any coercion or undue influence. By complying with these elements, participants had the decision-making autonomy to participate at will and stop participation at any time without repercussions.

I protected the privacy of the interviewees. Sanjari et al. (2014) highlighted the importance of privacy of participant's information and pointed out the need for

researchers to avoid soliciting private information not closely related to the research question. I took privacy protective steps in the collecting, coding, transcription, and storing of data. Mitchell and Wellings (2013) emphasized the protection of the privacy of participants by ensuring confidentiality in the writing of the study. Hence, I personally collected and transcribed the data from participants. I coded and maintained the names of participants and organizations secret for privacy and other ethical reasons. Lancaster (2016) encouraged the ability to mitigate the potential harm to participants by protecting the rights of participants and confidentiality. I protected and secured the identities of participants and their organizations. Sanjari et al. (2014) highlighted the responsibility of researchers in safeguarding participants' rights and personal information to avoid negative consequences by taking part in the study. I kept all records secured and private for 5 years. After the 5 years period, I will destroy the records.

Data Collection Instruments

In this qualitative case study, the goal was to obtain information from organizational managers about effective strategies implemented to help reduce employee absenteeism. I was the primary data collection instrument by conducting interviews. For qualitative studies, study researchers take on the role of the primary instrument for data collection (Al-Kadri, Al-Kadi, & Van Der Vleuten, 2013; Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013; Yin, 2014). I used semistructured interviews as the principal source of data in the data collection process. I also used documents and archival records for data collection. Houghton et al. (2013) identified the need to use multiple sources of data collection sources to strengthen the results of a case study. When researchers used multiple

perspectives to understand the same problem, researchers could gain valuable insights that otherwise could go unnoticed (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). Therefore, I strengthened the evidence by using multiple data sources to gain a broader perspective from both historical and behavioral points of view.

For the interviews, I followed a protocol to ensure consistency throughout the interview process (see Appendix A). Jacob and Furgerson (2012) suggested developing interview protocols to help guide the process and avoid the risk of forgetting something on the part of the interviewer. Wolgemuth et al. (2015) confirmed the use of semistructure interview protocols in multiple studies which provided contrasts of opinions while allowing participants' time to reflect about the topics researched. Furthermore, O'Halloran, Littlewood, Richardson, Tod, and Nesti (2016) also highlighted the importance of preparing well for the initial interview questions and to avoid leading participants to specific answers.

The interviews involved open-ended questions that focus on determining effective strategies that influence employees' decisions to be absent (see Appendix B). People conducting personal interviews are unique by having the ability to immediately grasp confusing testimonies and process them to provide meaning (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). As the interviewer-researcher, I asked the questions, engage in dialog, record the interview, and document the information. I followed the Jacob and Furgerson (2012) recommendation of letting the interviewee know that there were going to be subsequent contacts to check the transcript. Wolgemuth et al. (2015) highlighted the importance to produce a reliable interview transcript that would capture the participants' reflections on

the questions asked. I completed transcription and contact participants to conduct transcript review to make sure that the transcription is complete and accurate. Wolgemuth et al. referred to interview participants' feedback on transcripts before using the interview notes for the final research write up.

In addition to the interviews with managers, I also pursued relevant information from documents and archival records of the maquiladoras included in the study. Yin (2014) included both, documents and archival records, as two other valid sources of evidence. The documents and archival records served as the study's secondary source of evidence. Rowlinson, Hassard, and Decker (2014) recommended that the use of secondary data, such as documented historical organizational data, be a complement to other primary research data. Yin indicated that documents and archive records provided accurate information to corroborate evidence from other sources, especially for case studies. To explore additional evidence on effective strategies to help reduce employee absenteeism, I used only relevant information found on these documents and records used in the study. Therefore, I sought access to written policies relevant to employee absenteeism, incentives to promote attendance and prevent absenteeism, absenteeism metrics records, and relevant managerial reports. In qualitative studies, researchers used documents to complement face-to-face interviews to better understand the data collected required answering the research question (Houghton et al., 2013; Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). With all data collected, from interviews, documentation, and archival data, I gained testimonies, evidence, and deeper insights for addressing what strategies managers use to help reduce employee absenteeism.

Data Collection Technique

For this qualitative case study, I explored what strategies managers use to help reduce employee absenteeism in U.S. operations within the maquila plants in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Researchers of qualitative studies commonly collect data by using personal interviews (Anyan, 2013; Houghton et al., 2013; Yin, 2014). To find relevant absenteeism data, I invited experienced management participants to take part on face-to-face interviews to provide primary data about employee absenteeism strategies.

There are advantages and disadvantages to all data collection techniques. In the case of interviewing, advantages include: (a) a convenience way to collect detail data from targeted participants, (b) obtained historical data and causal inferences with explanations from insightful participants, and (c) control of line of questioning by the interviewer (Anyan, 2013; Conrad et al., 2013; Yin, 2014). On the disadvantages of interviewing, researchers are limited to the interviewer personal limitation as an articulate and perceptive interviewer (Fetters, Guetterman, Power, & Nease, 2016; Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). In addition, participants could filter information by including biased responses by the presence of the interviewer, causing reflexivity, or the setting (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013; Yin, 2014).

Understanding the risks and opportunities, I conducted face-to-face interviews asking 6 open-ended questions (see Appendix B). By the use of these qualitative interview questions, I sought responses from participants in the topic area of employee absenteeism and strategies to reduce it. During the interviews, I used open-ended questions. I narrowed the data collection by focusing on four aspects: (1) what strategies

have been implemented; (2) why were these strategies adopted; (3) how were these strategies implemented; and (4) what were the results. By using the participant responses, I was able to identify and understand strategies used that influence the reduction of employee absenteeism for the set of organizations to be included in this case study.

For this study's participant selection, I contacted the HR departments of local organizations to obtain agreement to participate, as well as to request a list and contact information of managers within the organizations who have working experience and have participation in employee absenteeism strategies. Benoot et al. (2016) referred to the advantage of seeking access to topic experienced participants to help identify relevant information in timely manner. From this potential management participant list, I sent out invitations via e-mail and asked for responses to volunteer for the study. From the positive respondents' list, I followed with a phone call to schedule a face-to-face interview. Elo et al. (2014) indicated that researchers use judgment to choose participants who best represent the population and have better knowledge of the topic at hand. The participants met the criteria of having acceptable job experience on the issues of absenteeism and their organizational strategies to deal with employee absenteeism.

For the interview meetings, I planned to take approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour in length for each participant. The interview took place at the manager's office or at alternative private place with the practicality of using an audio recording and where the interviewee felt more comfortable. All interviews were conducted in English using a voice recording device. At the end of the interview, I thanked participants for their participation.

To strengthen the evidence data that could lead to accurate findings, I obtained relevant worker absenteeism related documentation and archival records from the organizations involved. These records did not include individual employee names or any identifiable data and was only used to seek organizational informational evidence involving employee absenteeism related strategies, activities, and policies. For qualitative studies, researchers identified the use of interviews, documents, and archival records as acceptable sources to form a body of evidence (Britten et al., 2017; Rowlinson et al., 2014; Yin 2014). Therefore, the use of interviews, documents, and archival records allowed the ability to address the research question and to meet the study multiple sources requirement for case study research.

Upon receiving approval from the Walden University IRB, I used the following process to gather the interview data for this case study. I gathered contact information on potential study participants from known organizations that operate maquiladoras in Juarez, Mexico. I conducted pilot interviews with at least two managers of nonparticipant organizations to test the interview protocol, the consent form, set clarity about the interview questions and length of time for the interview. The pilot participants and any data obtained were not included in the research interview process. Al-Kadri et al. (2013) highlighted the benefit of preliminary interviewing as a way to improve the questions for future interviews.

After refining the clarity of these interview components, I initiated contact, via e-mail or telephone, with potential participants by explaining the purpose of the study, the require consent from protocol, the interview protocol, and the participant's right to take

part in the study. I provided participants a written copy of the consent form and go over any questions or concerns from the participants. Once the participant agreed and signed agreement form, I collected the approved agreement via e-mail and requested a schedule with a particular place, date, and time to conduct the interview. Wolgemuth et al. (2015) indicated that participants' experiences varied depending on their interview experience but generally appreciate the opportunity to take part in the interview because of the potential value to the interviewee, such as the feeling of being validated on the field.

At the beginning of each interview, I reminded participants about the study intent, the interview process, and the participants' rights on participating and answering or not any questions. I interviewed 11 participants and reached data saturation by using an interview protocol (see Appendix A). I wrote notes and audio recorded the questions and answers to preserve the integrity of the responses provided by participants. I transcribed verbatim the data and sent a completely typed copy to the interviewee participant for review. The respondent was asked to confirm the accuracy and completeness of the interview data transcript (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Lewis, 2015). Once the participant approved the transcription, I proceeded to upload the participants' answers to the questions into NVivo software. By using NVivo, I was able to identify the themes and interpret responses that led me to interpretations of the data for the interviews. Al-Kadri et al. (2013) used computer software by uploading interview transcriptions and allowing them to analyze thematically the data.

I obtained and analyzed relevant documentation and archival records on worker absenteeism from the organizations involved in the study. As with interviews,

documentation, and archival records present other sets of advantages and disadvantages. Advantages of these two sources of written information include, (a) retrievability at any or multiple times; (b) produced independently of this study; (c) contain exact and broad information about events; and (d) saves data collection time for the researcher (Rowlinson et al., 2014; Yin, 2014). Disadvantages of both written data sources include, (a) the difficulty of finding it; (b) could only include some and not all the written information on the topic; (c) could include a past time bias by the author; and (d) limited accessibility because privacy limitations (Yin, 2014). Turner, Cardinal, and Burton (2015) warned about potential biases and argued that archival records, as well as documentation, should only be used to support the triangulation process as a supplement to other forms of primary data collection like interviews.

Understanding the written documents' and archival records' strengths and weaknesses, I solicited access to view documents and archive data from the organizations' records as a way to compare data from different sources. Fusch and Ness (2015) indicated that the point when no new data emerge and new themes are exhausted; is the point when the researcher has reached data saturation. By using multiple sources of data, such as interviews, documentation, and archival record, I was able to strengthen the evidence leading to accurate findings and identifying strategies used to lower employee absenteeism in U.S. operations within the maquila plants in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

Data Organization Technique

I organized the data in a way to keep it in order, available for recall, and confidential. Saunders, Kitzinger, and Kitzinger (2015) highlighted the importance of

keeping data confidential from exposure of personal and third party information.

Similarly, Gibson, Benson, and Brand (2013) indicated that the use of generic codes assigned to each participant can provide anonymity and confidentiality. Furthermore, Lewis (2015) supported the use of codes to categorized data collected to facilitate the data analysis. For this case study research, I categorized data using alphanumerical generic codes by interview participants and organizations. The use of categorization codes provided data organizational platform to store data collected, facilitate data retrieval, and keep all data sources confidential.

To keep confidentiality, I used a coding system for data records. I used a combination of organization and participant numbering code. First, I assigned a letter 'O', referring to the participant organization, and a number from 1 to 6 which were the total number of organizations included in the study. Second, I assigned a letter 'P', referring to a participant, and a number from 1 to 4 up to the actual total number of interview participants per organization. For documents and archival records, I made electronic or paper copies if allowed, or take notes from the documents and company archival records. Kavoura and Bitsani (2014) divided the data sources into components to produce an organized category system that facilitated the grouping of data from different sources. In this case study, this grouping refers to the various data to be gathered from participants of interviews, documents, and archival records belonging to a common organization. Consequently, I provided the safeguards to ensure confidentiality of both interview participants and written data from organizations.

George, Haas, and Pentland (2014) highlighted the importance of mechanisms of data protection, as well as privacy for management scholars as part of their research methodology. Consequently, I transferred all data to an electronic form, physically secure the data, and keep under password protection only known to me. Researchers must store transcribed interviews, audio recordings, geographical location, written archives and documents data in codified folders for each participant, in order to ensure the required level of confidentiality (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Zandbergen, 2014). The confidentiality goal is to achieve a balance between gaining useful detailed data and reducing the risk of identifying participants (Zandbergen, 2014). I kept all the data secured for a minimum of five years after the completion of the study. At the end of 5 years, I will delete all electronic files related to the study by first erasing all files from the storage device and then physically destroying the device.

Data Analysis

Finding the appropriate data analysis process and tools is an ongoing challenge for researchers using the qualitative method because of the subjective nature and complexity of the data sources (Woods, Paulus, Atkins, & Macklin, 2015). The data analysis included data obtained from interview of management participants, as well as company absenteeism related reports, policies, and procedures. Woods et al. (2015) highlighted the challenge of collecting text from interviews and the analytical process of repeatedly reading until researchers can make sense of the data. Hence, I analyzed data from these multiple sources to seek answers to the research questions and provided an

understanding of the multiple perspectives and strategic approaches that influence production line workers' decisions not to be absent from their work.

Qualitative studies rely on the collection of large amounts of data through interviews and other sources to make sense of the data (DeFelice & Janesick, 2015; Woods et al., 2015; Yin, 2014). In addition to data gathered from personal interviews, I reviewed company policies, memos, reports, presentations, files, to help define categories and themes to be used for data analysis. I used data collected from the interviews, documents, and archives from company files to understand strategies that maquiladora managers used to help reduce employee absenteeism within U.S. operations in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico companies.

In this case study, I analyzed data following the methodological triangulation analysis method. Methodological triangulation refers the combination of two or more data collection methods with the intent of providing in-depth understanding from multiple perspectives while examining the same phenomenon (Hussein, 2015; Turner et al., 2015). Yin (2014) highlighted the importance of collecting information from multiple sources as well to corroborate the same phenomenon aimed to achieve data saturation. Furthermore, Fusch and Ness (2015) indicated the link between triangulation and data saturation, and that triangulation leads to saturation. By cross-referencing the information from various sources, I was able to identify and exhaust relevant themes to provide understanding into effective strategies used to help reduce employee absenteeism.

During the analysis process, textual data should be transformed into categories and themes (Wolgemuth et al., 2015; Woods et al., 2015). Pogoda, Cramer, Rosenheck,

& Resnick (2015) proposed detailed reviews of captured transcripts so research themes could emerge from the data. For purpose of this study, first, I classified framework themes from the themes gathered during data collection. Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas (2013) recommended reading interview data repeatedly to find categories and define themes to prepare for data for analysis. Consequently, Elo et al. (2014) insisted on the importance of selecting and evaluating categories to identify similarities and differences among the themes and how well these represent the data. This theme discovery and classification process continued until all the data was organized by frequencies.

To organize the data from all interviewees, I used different codes to classify each participant's responses clearly. I used a combination of code letters for participant by organization. The code letter "O" was used to identify the organization, numbered from 1 to 6, and the code letter "P" was used to denote a participant, numbered 1 through 4, to identify interview participants per organization. Lewis (2015) supported the use of codes to categorized data collected into workable themes and subthemes to facilitate the data analysis. Furthermore, DeFelice and Janesick (2015) recommended using coding software to organize the responses and assist in bringing meaning to the data. Accordingly, Woods et al. (2015) suggested the use of qualitative data analysis software for researchers to ensure that coding is consistent throughout the analytical process of collected data.

NVivo is a commonly used software program that facilitates content analysis in qualitative studies (DeFelice & Janesick, 2015; DeFranco & Laplante, 2017; Polat,

2015;). As a result, I used NVivo software to code responses and assist in the determination of themes. DeFelice and Janesick (2015) referred to the use of application software packages available to assist researchers in reducing the cumbersome tasks of making sense of the whole from the complexity of shared experiences. The use of NVivo enabled the ability to be more efficient in organizing, reviewing, and relating the data collected. Furthermore, Garret-Howard (2012) highlighted that the NVivo software can assist researchers in the alignment of data collected with previous research literature.

For the conceptual framework, I selected the Herzberg's two-factor theory to help explore and understand employee absenteeism from the employees' attitudes toward their jobs. I included themes related to various dimension identified as influencers on employee absenteeism. These themes include, (a) individual dimension of the employees; (b) social dimension around the employees; (c) the leadership dimension of employees supervisors and management; (d) the organizational dimension; and (e) the cultural dimension influencing employees' behavior. Then, I related themes identified during data collection to those included in the literature. Woods et al. (2015) highlighted the practice of investigating the relationships between literature concepts and participants statements. The results of this analysis supported the results of the study and may assist business managers in understanding the strategies to reduce maquiladora employee absenteeism in Mexico.

Reliability and Validity

To provide valid, relevant, valuable, and trustworthy results, researchers must develop, conduct, and communicate the strategies the support or prove the accuracy of

the collected data (Tuval-Mashiach, 2017). For qualitative studies, Cope (2013) indicated that the research perspectives focus on credibility and trustworthiness instead of on rigor and validity from quantitative studies. Houghton et al. (2013) presented four criteria to address the trustworthiness of qualitative research approach, including the attributes of confirmability, dependability, credibility, and transferability. To avoid any bias, I ensured that no one gender, age group, or marital status dominates the sample to produce a bias on the findings.

Confirmability and Dependability

To provide quality findings, I placed confirmability and dependability of the study data as an important aspect of this research. Houghton et al. (2013) pointed to the need for a rigorous quality standards as a critical component of the qualitative inquiry which continuous to gain recognition as a great contributor to research. As a strategy to achieve quality findings, the implementation of detailed processes could ensure results are valid and trustworthy in any study (Tuval-Mashiach, 2017). O'Reilly and Parker (2012) suggested that quality findings can be achieved by deploying an approach that is both stable and replicable. In other research instances, a qualitative study procedure produced consistent findings and conclusions when deployed by other researchers (Houghton et al., 2013).

I used a series of procedures to enhance dependability and confirmability of results from the research. Qualitative dependability and confirmability of the study are processes to assess internal consistency (Houghton et al., 2013). Lishner (2015) suggested dependability in qualitative research as the adoption of methods accepted as

legitimate that would enhance reliability and objectivity. Procedures included detailed documentation of a series of clear steps to avoid biases and distortions in the study. I documented the following: (a) data collection procedures to clearly state each step; (b) testing of recording devices to avoid data loss caused by device failure or inadequate recording; (c) interview protocol to detail opening, questioning, and closing of interview; (d) a pilot test to ensure well understood instructions and meaningful interview questions with nonparticipants with like-participants characteristics; (e) raw interview data transcription; (f) checking of data by the interviewee to confirm accuracy of transcription; (g) definition, codification, and verification of consistency of themes; (h) analysis and interpretation of data; and, (i) safe storage of all documents and recordings. Houghton et al. (2013) indicated that by outlining the decisions made throughout the study, researchers can set an audit trail to set the rationale behind the judgments made by the researcher to achieve the end-product of the study.

In the case that a data source was only available in Spanish, I would have taken additional steps of dependability and confirmability to translate the raw interview data accurately from Spanish into English. For this purpose, and in addition to my translation, a second competent Spanish-English translator could have been used to avoid misinterpretations or misrepresentations of the actual answers by the interviewee. To preserve confidentiality, I obtained a signed confidentiality agreement from the translator and put it in the appendix. Translation alignment between the second translator and my translation could have been conducted to avoid inconsistency from the participants' answers in Spanish to the coding and further interpretation in English.

These elements of confirmability and dependability in data collection were in place in order to achieve quality findings in this qualitative study. Peredaryenko and Krauss (2013) proposed the use of good quality recordings followed by transcribed verbatim to enhance dependability and use of intercoder agreements. I used intercoder agreements to provide the independent view of a second coder for external check to ensure objectivity and stability of responses throughout the coding and interpretation of data. As the researcher of this study, I developed the required topic expertise by continuously reading and researching the latest findings on the topic from peer-reviewed journal articles and other sources of publications. To achieve the trustworthiness on the results, the researcher has to demonstrate dependability and confirmability, in order to achieve constancy of the data throughout the study and under similar conditions (Houghton et al., 2013). I documented and strictly follow the steps determined to ensure consistency, reduce biases, and provide both dependability and confirmability, keys to a quality reliable qualitative study findings.

Credibility and Transferability

In addition to uncovering quality findings for the study, I made sure that credible conclusions are supported by fact findings and procedural validation. Qualitative validity of the study refers to procedures that when implemented help confirm the elements of value, believability, and transferability other similar situations (Houghton et al., 2013). The validity within a qualitative study involved the elements of credibility for internal validity and transferability for external validity. Credibility involves establishing a chain of evidence that is based on transparency, methodological discipline, evidence focus, and

truly reflects the participants' views (Stewart & Gapp, 2017). Transferability is a process to attest consistency and generalizability of findings with applicability in other settings or contexts (Houghton et al., 2013). Both credibility and transferability were the determinant factors for the validation of findings in this qualitative research study.

To achieve the credibility of findings criteria, I used methodological triangulation. Archibald. (2016) referred to methodological triangulation as a method of involving multiple sources of information with the intent of increasing the internal credibility of the study findings. Davies (2003) indicated that triangulation enhances the research issue's breadth and depth as both quantitative and qualitative data strength is improved. For the primary source of data, I conducted semistructured open-ended interviews of managers to gain insight into strategies and factors affecting employee absenteeism behavior. These manager participants belonged to different organizations, and different responsibilities within each of the organizations included in the study. For the second source of data, I collected secondary data from the published government and private associations that post statistics and other facts about employee absenteeism. The use of methodological triangulation allowed the ability to compare, from different data sources methods, areas of agreement and divergence while adding credibility to the results.

Transferability refers to the applicability of the study findings to other settings (Houghton et al., 2013). I pursued transferability by describing context and assumptions while bringing meaning to the interview responses to ensure that individual readers, not involved in the study, can associate the themes with their personal experiences and determine the findings to be transferable (Cope, 2014). The transferability on these study

findings applied to the generalization of factors affecting similar employees' decisions to be absent or not in production settings from maquila U.S. plants of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Together transferability and credibility procedures enhanced the quality of the findings and add understanding to the body of literature on the employee absenteeism topic.

Transition and Summary

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study research using multiple case and data sources was to explore what strategies business leaders use to help reduce employee absenteeism. I utilized interviews, documentation, and archival data to gain in-depth descriptions of effective organizational strategies used in maquila U.S. operations to manage employee absenteeism in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. I targeted the participation of plant managers, human resource managers, and first-line managers challenged by employee absenteeism. I used purposeful sampling and sought a minimum sample of 11 operational leaders from different U.S. operations located in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Prior collecting any data, I obtained the official permission from the Walden University IRB to commence the field study. For data collection, I used face-to-face semistructured interviews, audio recorded, and transcribe the data verbatim. In addition, I reviewed documents and archives related to employee absenteeism. From these secondary data source, I took relevant notes that could help explain effective management strategies to help reduce employee absenteeism. Once the interviewed participants approved the transcription, I proceeded to upload the participants' answers to the questions into NVivo software to identify emerging themes and repeated patterns within the study.

In Section 2, after restating the purpose statement, I discussed my role as the researcher, the study participants, the research methodology and design, the population and sampling, ethical consideration of the study, the data collection and organization technique, the data analysis, and the elements incorporated for reliability and validity; in terms of confirmability, dependability, credibility, and transferability. In section 3, I included (a) an overview of the study, (b) the presentation of the study findings, (c) the applications to professional business practice, (d) the implications for social change, (e) a set of recommendations for action, and (f) the recommendations for future studies in the area of managing employee absenteeism. Finally, I ended section 3 with a summary and conclusions for the entire study.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive multiple case study was to explore what effective strategies operational managers used to reduce employee absenteeism. I conducted semistructured interviews with 11 operations and HR managers from six U.S. maquiladora operations in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. From the findings of this case study, I identified seven strategies used to improve employees' work attendance and reduce absenteeism.

In addition to interviewing management participants, I sought secondary data such as company documentation and archival data. I was granted access to company policies regarding employee attendance, bonus structure tables, minute notes from meetings, graphs, and disciplinary actions taken on employee absenteeism. These secondary data sources provided evidence that supported the testimonies shared by interviewed managers regarding attendance policy expectations, deployment, and follow up as key to reducing employee absenteeism. Secondary data complemented the data from management interviews and strengthen the research findings. Based on the data collected during this study, the following themes emerged: (a) leadership, (b) organizational support, (c) work environment, (d) compensation, (e) recognition (f) disciplinary actions, and (g) staffing policies.

Presentation of the Findings

The overarching research question addressed in this study was: "What strategies do operational managers use to help reduce employee absenteeism?" Using

semistructured interviews as the primary source of data, I asked participants six open-ended interview questions to explore effective strategies used by managers within six organizations included in this multiple case study. Eleven maquiladora operational and HR managers who work for U.S. organizations with sorting and manufacturing operations within the maquiladora industry in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico participated in the study.

I used NVIVO to transcribe the data collected from participants' responses to the interview questions (see Appendix A). I cataloged a list of common phrases shared by participants during the interview to help identify strategies used to effectively reduce employee absenteeism. The participants' responses led to multiple common phrases such as (a) supervisor, (b) recognition to employees, (c) personal or family illnesses, (d) wages and bonuses, (e) transportation, (f) cafeteria, (g) work conditions, (h) labor shortages, (i) medical services, (j) child care, and (i) government processes. From this list of phrases, I grouped the information into seven main themes, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1.

Frequency of Themes Related to Effective Strategies to Reduce Employee Absenteeism

Theme	<i>n</i>	% of frequency occurrence
Organizational Support	103	24%
Leadership Quality	85	20%
Compensation and Benefits	71	17%
Disciplinary Actions	62	14%
Recognition	54	13%
Work Environment	31	7%
Staffing Policies	24	6%

N= primary and secondary data themes ranked by frequency

Theme 1: Organizational Support

The first theme identified was organizational support. All interview participants shared multiple instances where workers expected the organization to be flexible and provide support for employees' personal needs. By providing extra support, companies were able to gain employee loyalty toward the firm by meeting employees' expectations and reducing time length of absence, while preventing workers from seeking other positions elsewhere. These general findings are in line with Meyer et al. (2015), who highlighted the rise of employee loyalty as a result of organizational support. Therefore, it is important for manufacturing and processing companies, in the Ciudad Juarez area to adopt policies that help employees cope with life's daily challenges that may interfere with the ability or desire to attend work.

All participants agreed that providing extra supporting benefits to employees, such as flexibility when dealing with personal problems, would help companies keep a competitive edge in the labor market in terms of employee attendance and retention. Most participants shared how (a) free transportation to and from work, (b) free cafeteria services, and (c) medical services by providing company access to doctor and nurse, were expected and commonly provided within the maquiladora industry in Ciudad Juarez. Hassan et al.(2014) highlighted that employees' perceived organizational support was associated with lower levels of employees' withdrawal behaviors, including absenteeism.

To better understand employees' expectations, companies conducted various forms of obtaining employees feedback on how their expectations were or not met. One of these interventions was shared by O3P1, who indicated having conducted focus groups

to gain better understanding on employees' personal needs, expectations, and perceptions about the services provided by the organization. This statement is in line with Lokke (2015), who raised the importance of understanding potential causes of absences to adjust managerial approach strategies. One common service expectation by employees and often provided by organizations was the company sponsored bus transportation service. Based on employees' home addresses, management designed bus routes to cover main roadways to walking distances from the employees' homes.

O2P1 shared that they provided free medicines for common illnesses in order to speed up employee recovery and avoid long or frequent absences when employees try to get these services or pharmaceutical products to treat their illnesses. Furthermore, O6P1 indicated the need to provide nonemergency medical attention, and even basic medicines for a sick child. This strategy of providing medical attention and medicines would incentivize employees to go to work and for the child to get the needs met for a quicker recovery. Absent employees commonly reported to have a sick child, a problem with the spouse injured at home, or simply not having anyone to take care of their children. Concurrently, O1P3, O3P2, and O5P1, identified the caring of children as the major cause of employee absenteeism among employees. According to most participants, workers facing any of these issues expected the organization to understand and be flexible on these issues considered by employees as out of their control.

In addition to a sick child, employees also face the challenge of someone caring for their children while parents work. Therefore, other strategies used by organizations included the provision for employees to have access to daycare. O4P2 informed that their

organization went into the community and identified a daycare service for their employees' children. In order to cope with availability of service and costs, companies reached out and sponsored local children daycare facilities to provide services to their employees' children needs.

Similarly, other participants' testimonials in general indicated that employee expectations were beyond traditional basic organizational support services, and that employees also expected the organization to have a high degree of flexibility when they confronted personal problems outside of work. Highlighting this point, O2P1 stressed the importance of being flexible with the needs of employees especially in terms of permissions to either arrive late or leave work early to attend a personal matter. Without this level of flexibility, employees would be absent through a whole shift for something that only took a couple of hours. Therefore, having the flexibility to either arrive late, leave early, or get the permission to be absent sometime during the shift; would allow employees to take care of their personal need and increase attendance via a partial shift instead of a full absence (O2P1, O1P2, O6P2, and O1P4). Participants agreed that company assistance provided to employees dealing with personal issues, sometimes shown in the form of work schedule flexibility, was important on addressing absenteeism.

Some of the personal problems shared included employees not attending work due to alcohol intoxication from the night before and oversleeping past their work schedule, especially on Mondays. O6P2 stressed the importance of helping employees who routinely showed alcohol consumption problems, including referrals to specialized institutions to attend to control the discriminated use of alcohol. This referral approach

was normally a preferred option prior to firing for cause due to alcohol in the employees system. By providing flexibility toward employees' personal needs and challenges, companies can make mutually beneficial arrangements that could help the organization plan in advance and adapt their personnel needs proactively.

In summary, the organizational support strategy is based on fulfilling of some of the personal basic needs at no cost to the employees which include (a) transportation to and from work, (b) cafeteria services including two meals per shift, and (c) medical assistance including access to part time doctors, fulltime nurses, and medication, which in some instances includes the dispensing of medicines to close family member such as a child and spouse. In addition, the strategy extends to adding flexibility in the application of attendance rules directed to help employees deal with other personal challenges.

Theme 2: Leadership Quality

The second theme identified was leadership quality. Multiple interview questions allowed the participants to share how (a) supervisor, (b) manager, and (c) HR personnel interactions with employees are important in getting employees to raise commitment toward attendance and to avoid absenteeism when possible. Participants emphasized the importance of how employees are treated by their direct supervisors for attendance behaviors. Participants recognized that quality leadership skills were fundamentally important to foster an environment where employees would chose to attend work over being absent. O2P1 insisted that employees perceived that if their supervisor treated them with respect, cared for them, and helped them when needed, the employee would reciprocate to a supervisor with higher level of commitment and flexibility when needed.

Krishnan (2012) found consistent evidence relating supervisors' and subordinates' interactions to employees' attitudes toward attendance. Study participants insisted in the importance of having supervisors who are sensitive to employee's needs. To foster a service oriented environment and provide the necessary skills, O3P1 indicated that their organization was constantly providing courses to improve leadership skills of supervisors at all levels. In general, interviewed managers suggested that the quality of leadership interactions between supervisors and subordinates would create an environment where employees felt comfortable, and with sufficient confidence, to communicate in advance about personal challenges. These proactive interactions between both parties would set the stage to the discovery of alternative ways of handling outside work demand without interfering with the employees' ability or willingness to attend work instead of being absent. Frooman et al. (2012) indicated that leadership was a determinant for correct absenteeism behavior.

In addition to treatment, participants highlighted the importance for supervisors to know their subordinates' personal contributions to the company. Participants emphasized that workers respond to someone they feel recognizes their contributions and helps them when facing personal challenges. This is in line with Elshout et al. (2013) who identified that content employees who felt secured with their superiors would provide better customer service and be less likely to be absent. Interviewees referred to an unwritten rule regarding employees' perceptions of their treatment from their supervisors. If the supervisor behaved amicably, attentively, and flexibly to subordinates, employees would

be more likely to respond with the same set of behaviors toward supervisors requests for additional tasks.

Alternatively, if supervisors were inattentive to workers and their needs, employees would do the same and would be less likely to do extra work outside their normal function. OIP3 indicated that supervisors that could not foster an environment of caring and service toward their subordinates risk their positions by being replaced. Consequently, supervisor behaviors toward direct reports seem to influence employees' behaviors toward absenteeism. Therefore, supervisors' behaviors and attitudes toward subordinates must be included on an effective strategy on reducing absenteeism.

In summary, supervisors seem to play an important role in the relationship to employees that influences employees' response and attitudes toward work including deciding to show up to work, informing the company about personal challenges that may interfere with work attendance, or even asking for assistance with personal challenges. Consistent participant testimonials support the need to establish strategies that foster supervisors' empathy and good communication toward employees. Being receptive, accessible, and attentive to employees needs appears to be key leadership characteristics required to positively influence employees, promote good attendance, and effectively reduce employee unplanned absenteeism.

Theme 3: Compensation

The third theme identified was compensation. Due to the increased and growing demand for workers by the maquila industry in Ciudad Juarez, participants agreed that compensation both in terms of wages and bonuses have skyrocketed and become a

constant issue for maquiladoras to remain competitive in the labor market. Accordingly, substantial increases in base wages and bonuses have grown in both value and classification types of bonuses. All participants reported a variety of bonuses intended to keep employees and to reduce absenteeism.

In Ciudad Juarez, the manufacturing and processing industry has grown and outpaced the availability of qualified workers to fulfill jobs in the last few years. The increase of job offerings has raised the demand for workers, which has put pressure on compensation to fulfill job openings within the maquiladora industry. O1P2, O2P1, O3P1, and O5P1 agreed on sharing the need for companies to continuously test the market for competitive compensation to keep up in both wages and bonuses. Internal reports and minutes shared by participant organizations showed the importance given to monitoring changes on compensation offerings by labor competing organizations that are constantly advertising higher wages and incentives. O2P1, O1P3, and O6P2 indicated they were constantly in touch with the maquiladora association in an attempt to keep up with competitive compensation offerings. On the same line of thought, O1P4, O5P1, and O3P1 highlighted the constant need to keep up with the market and avoid employees being absent looking for the next increase elsewhere.

Participants from organizations included in the study shared different bonuses that were paid in addition to basic wages. These bonuses included additional compensation for (a) attendance (O1, O2, O3, O4, O5 and O6); (b) punctuality (O1, O2, O3, and O4); (c) antiquity (O2, O3, and O6); and for unionized organizational participant, (d) job certification and (e) the union belonging bonus, both of these linked to a good attendance

record. The attendance bonus was given to employees for not being absent. Attendance bonuses are given on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. Clearly stated in all participant companies' internal rule books, the attendance bonus serves to reward good attendance and to reprimand absenteeism. O3P2 and O1P3 indicated that by providing some exceptions to losing the attendance bonus, such as asking for permission in advance, employees would be motivated to make prior arrangements to avoid losing their attendance bonus. O2P1 shared that by providing incentives to motivate employees to inform in advance reduced previous full days of absenteeism to partial day of absence. In other words, employees that used to be absent the whole day were now only absent part to the day, therefore reducing the length of time absent and the cost of absenteeism.

As a result of the flexibility with keeping attendance bonuses even if arriving late or leaving early, participants indicated the establishment of punctuality bonuses to motivate employees to attend work within the designated hours without interruptions outside of work. Paid to employees for not being late or for leaving early, the punctuality bonus was an additional layer of incentives to motivate employees to being on time and complete their entire shift without interruptions (O1P2, O2P1, O3P2, O4P1, and O4P2). Other economic incentives were included to provide differentiation between new more experienced workers. One of these incentives was the antiquity bonus that serves as a multiplier for both punctuality and attendance bonuses, given to those employees who have longer tenure in the company (O1P3 and O3P1). In the unionized organization, O1P2, O1P3, and O1P4 noted that attendance was improved by applying the job certification bonus which could be earned, in addition to performing skills, by keeping

good attendance record. Finally, a union belonging bonus was given to employees who demonstrated good attendance records in alignment with other requirements and skills necessary to being considered a permanent employee (O1).

In summary, compensation initiatives could be impactful as perceived by employees. The strategy of offering bonuses link to attendance is broadly used by all participating organizations. Bonuses linked to reduce absenteeism promote employees to consistently show up to work when scheduled, by rewarding employees with good attendance and penalizing employees who are absent.

Theme 4: Disciplinary Actions

The fourth theme identified was disciplinary actions. Participants insisted in the need to provide a regulatory framework regarding absenteeism. O3P2 raised the importance of establishing a disciplinary framework to address absenteeism problems. All participant organizations brought up the need for internal regulatory procedures to confront absenteeism, especially while facing the outside pressures of the labor market.

Employees know that jobs are abundant and therefore do not fear losing their jobs. Nevertheless, the majority of employees do respond when confronted about absenteeism and punctuality (O1P3 and O6P2). Therefore, participants in general pointed the need to establish a baseline discipline of acceptable and unacceptable behavior. O3P2 described the establishment of discipline as one of the most important things to do to bring down absenteeism. All participants insisted on actions that included closely monitoring attendance and absenteeism, to investigate and explain each absenteeism

event, and to take disciplinary actions when employees had recurrent unexcused absences.

Participants considered important that employees understood the severity of being absent, not only for the company but even for workers themselves. O3P2 indicated that an early meeting at the beginning of the shift was granted to all employees absent on the previous day. According to company policies reviewed for this study, it was common, among all cases, the need to have written policies and constant communication. In accordance, O4P2 shared the importance about communicating with employees about their absences and following up with a disciplinary action with an specific schedule to avoid forgetting the follow up and lack of progress toward reducing absences. The enforcement of disciplinary actions would help avoid fostering an environment where employees would perceive that no disciplinary action would be granted and that absenteeism was an acceptable and normal employee behavior. O1P3 highlighted the importance of not only having policies but enforcing them across the board with all employees. The importance of having a standardized policy that applies to all employees supported with consistent application of disciplinary actions. O1P2 stressed the need to constantly increase the level of awareness of these policies among all workers.

In addition, employees' perception about the legitimacy of absenteeism could be beneficial or detrimental to reducing absenteeism, based on what really happens after an employee is absent. O6P1, O1P3, and O5P1 highlighted the importance for employees to know that if they were absent the day before, they would be taken to the HR office to discuss the absence and be expected to be asked about the causes of the absence. O5P1

indicated that they go beyond talking and request employees to write down the reason for the absence on paper. In addition, O1P3 shared that their organization demands that all absent employees be brought to a conference room and be part of an inclusive meeting about absenteeism. These types of activities send the message that absenteeism is not tolerated and that it would be brought up when anyone is absent. The important aspect is that the organization does not send the wrong signal about absenteeism. Any wrong perception of legitimacy by employees, such as the feeling of nothing happens, could create a confusing environment where some employees could perceive it as favoritism to the segment of more absent employees.

In summary, disciplinary actions are complementary component of strategy. The actions taken upon attendance violation are of most importance for organizations. The enforcement of attendance requirement rules set the right attendance standard expectation to the employees. In order for disciplinary actions to be effective, both the written rules and the consequences should be communicated and understood by employees in general. And, supervision must make sure that policies are enforced and disciplinary actions are taken when granted in order to reduce absenteeism.

Theme 5: Recognition

The fifth theme identified was recognition. Participants emphasized the need to include achievement recognition as the basis for employee motivation to continue to come to work and do better every day. According to most participants, employees look forward to being recognized. O2P1 indicated that their organization is always looking for ways to recognize their staff for attendance.

O2P1, O3P1, and O4P1 commented about celebrating employees' birthdays.

Some birthday celebrations would be done once a month for all employees whose birthdays are during that month (O3P1 & O4P1). Companies would normally provide cake and sodas. In some cases, the company would encourage coworkers to coordinate individual employees, to celebrate birthdays, normally done on Fridays in the company cafeteria (O3P2). In the case of individual coworker organized celebrations, employees would have access to the cafeteria facilities, utensils, and drinks, as well as to some flexibility to go and pick up personal purchased cakes and special meals. O3P2 highlighted that the company allows for employees to wear a corsage on their birthday for coworkers and supervisors to cooperate attaching bills to the corsage.

Work anniversary and antiquity are other reasons to celebrate and a chance to recognize employees. Therefore, some companies promote the recognition of employees who have been with the company for periods of time. O4P2 shared an employee day celebration that is conducted once a year during the month of October, with the purpose of recognizing employees' attendance, punctuality, and antiquity in the company. Other participants conduct similar recognition activities but linked them to other celebration such as Christmas, mothers' day, fathers' day, children's day to mention some.

Performance based recognition are also common. O2P1, O1P2, and O3P2 have implemented the use of suggestion boxes to hear suggestions for improvement. Obtaining employees' ideas and responding to them is key in keeping an environment where employees want to come to work. Recognizing the right ideas is fundamental in fostering and environment of participation and empowerment. These types of recognition are other

forms of extending the dialog with employees who would be more likely to maintain good attendance when listened to.

Other types of recognition include raffles and cash bonuses. O3P1 and O3P2 explained that their organization recognizes attendance in two ways: monthly raffle and end of year cash bonuses. O1P3 indicated that in the organization, the company recognizes those work areas with less absenteeism. One important aspect is the involvement of members of management. O3P1 and O2P2 made the point that employee recognition is especially good when it comes from the direct superior and is backed up by a member of management. This higher level of recognition appears to be special for workers when some higher level of management recognizes the work done by line workers. The recognition strategy includes providing the means to make social interactions between employees and management with the employees at center stage. Recognizing the contributions and achievements of employees for worthwhile results seems to provide an environment of belonging and motivation toward attending work and achieving goals. Therefore, organizations would be better served by promoting events and activities that would go out of the normal to recognize true contribution made by employees. Therefore, recognition is vital component of a complete strategy to reduce absenteeism.

Theme 6: Work Environment

The sixth theme identified was work environment. Work environment was deemed important by participants that described it as an important pillar for reducing absenteeism (O3P1, O4P1, O5P1, O1P3, O6P2, and O4P2). One aspect brought by O4P1

was the importance of a friendly environment for employees to feel comfortable working in. Accordingly, O1P3 brought up that this friendly positive environment is even more important in the case of new employees who are deciding to adjust or not to the new company.

In another aspect of the work environment, interview Question 1 allowed participants to share how (a) safety, (b) temperature, and (c) the work itself could be a determinant in employees' decision to be absent or attend work. For instance, O4P1 reported that improvements in the work environment would likely result in friendlier environment. Conversely, O6P1 shared that in the case of their organizational, the nature of the job was very much hands-on and implied that lots of work would be of little regard when employees perceive that the job is physically very demanding. Job demands performance could bring detrimental consequences that could result in absenteeism, especially with new employees not used to the work physical demands.

Special work environment accommodations included end of shift times. O2P1 indicated to have made arrangements with the second shift employees that would shorten the end of shift time by 40 minutes in order for them to arrive home earlier than originally expected. This earlier departure took time from the breaks and subtracted from the end of the shift. This company arrangement benefited mothers and fathers that now arrive home at around midnight instead of 12:40 to 1:00 am (O2P1).

Some participants shared that monitoring work environment issues is of great importance. O3P1 shared the conduction of a survey every six months to assess the work climate and employees perception related to work environment. Based on the results,

management considers different initiatives to improve the conditions and ensure that the general concern of employees is taken into account to improve work environment challenges. Contrarily, O4P1 claimed to have taken action in multiple fronts to achieve an environment where employees like coming to work, and where absenteeism only occurs when uncontrollable events happen to employees. O4P2 confirmed that employees work at ease and have expressed to be happy with the work environment.

One initiative shared by O5P1 was that employees were educated about workloads and the commitment to fulfill customer orders. If an employee was missing on any given day, the company expected other members of the team to assume the workload burden of the missing employee. The assumed workload burden creates a higher level of commitment among the team that depends on each other to achieve the results expected. Conversely, O1P2 shared the challenges of achieving collaboration from a unionized plant. Furthermore, O1P2 explained that any additional collaboration demanded beyond the job description and normal workload was unacceptable and could only be obtained if the employee volunteers for the additional workload. In addition to restricted work tasks, the collective bargaining with the unions limited some of the of the safety equipment that could be provided since everyone is required to use the same safety equipment, same benefits, and compensation increases are made equally in percentage points. Nevertheless, O1P4 shared that the collective agreement did bring a positive change on work environment, that everyone was valued similarly, and no one had more value than others. Therefore, the perceived level ground promoted an environment of justice, equal value, and positive work environment.

In summary, work environment is fundamental for creating the conditions where employees want to attend work day-in and day-out. The effective absenteeism strategy would require the adoption of positive work environment initiatives. Management must put in place a monitoring system with metrics that would allow understanding of trends as well as challenges that must be addressed before discontent turns into absenteeism and possibly later turnover.

Theme 7: Staffing Policies

The seventh theme identified was staffing policies. This theme was presented as hiring strategy based on profiling employees with the idea of having ideal employees to handle the physical demands of the job, to have the least amount of personal problems, and to be willing to demonstrate higher levels of work attendance commitment.

The hiring policy varies among cases based on the physical requirements for the type of work. On one testimony, O2P1 reported hiring people with certain level of work experience resulting in workers above 28 years old. Contradicting, O1P4 reported aiming for more mature workers to avoid younger ones that according to the interviewee were less committed than older workers. O6P1 and O2P1 expressed that older workers were more stable and therefore less prompt to be absent. Likewise, O1P3 expressed frustration and has profile generation X employees as on without commitment to perform well at work and the need to find a solution to optimize their commitment to stay and work. Another strategy shared by O1P3 was that at the moment of recruiting, the HR responsible person would have to invite employees to recommend family members or even neighbors to apply and determine if they would be suitable for work.

In addition to the employee profile, participants highlighted the need to determine the number of people required in payroll in order to meet work demand even though some could be absent on the day needed. O1P3 raised the issue of having larger vulnerability since their employees were sought after by competing plants. This level of vulnerability, expressed by O1P2, forces companies to over hire and works with an expected rate of absenteeism to determine the level needed to not compromise production capacity and delivery times.

The main point here was that during the screening for new employees most organizations that participated in the case study included some type of subjective assessment in trying to predict personal challenges that the employee could be exposed to. The strategy, regarding staffing policy, is to recognize that during the hiring process one must determine if the applicant is a fit to the job, organization, and the real pressures and working conditions. In addition, manager forecast required working hours and staff accordingly to achieve the level of output and quality that meets expectations. Hiring the right person and a good number of them is fundamental for success and cope with employee absenteeism.

Findings Tied to Herzberg Two-Factor Theory

The study findings support the conceptual framework based on Herzberg two-factor theory and existing literature on absenteeism. Herzberg (1959) believed that need to influence employees' attitudes and workplace motivators to earn employees' commitment to better participate at work. The seven overarching themes can be classified as either hygiene or motivational factor.

Participants shared the use of strategies that were mostly linked to hygiene factors, such as (a) organizational support, (b) leadership quality, (c) disciplinary actions, (d) compensation, (e) staffing policies, and (f) work environment. According to Herzberg (1959) hygiene factors are those needed to be in place in order for organizations to prevent employees to become dissatisfied. In the conduction of this study, I found that hygiene factors played an important role in reducing absenteeism especially in the areas of compensation and benefits, quality of leadership interactions, work environment quality, and flexible life-work balance policies.

Participants also shared the use of recognition as a strategy to reduce absenteeism. Employee recognition falls under the motivational factors classification. Motivational factors refer to those elements needed to help drive employees to higher levels of performance (Herzberg et al., 1959). Participant managers reported that motivational factors also played a relevant role in reducing absenteeism. From the data collected, management participants indicated that maintaining a balance between recognizing good attendance and penalizing absenteeism was an effective tool used by participant organizations. The Herzberg two-factor theory provided an opportunity to explore strategies used by operational managers to effectively reduce employee absenteeism.

Applications to Professional Practice

From the business practice perspective, the findings of this study can be used by organizational managers to develop strategies to effectively manage employee absenteeism. Effective strategies to reduce employee absences can decrease the negative consequences of absenteeism, affecting planned capacity and potentially missing

organizational output targets to fulfill customer orders on a timely manner. Learning from participant managers gave insights into the factors influencing employee decisions to be absent as well as to the organizational responses to cope with scheduled employees not showing up to work.

The understanding of strategies to reduce employee withdrawal behaviors, such as employee absenteeism, made significant contributions to professional business practice by reducing workers' absences in production and processing plants. Stakeholders such as general plant, HR, production, and operational managers could benefit in the establishment of employee support services, expectations for supervisors, systems to monitor attendance issues, and budgetary resources to deploy strategies to minimize unplanned absences and therefore reducing worker voluntary absenteeism.

Direct employee supervisors and team leaders in general could gain insight knowledge regarding the importance of establishing open, truthful, and proactive communication with subordinate workers to be able to handle and respond to employees external pressures on a timely manner before these events result on employees not showing up to work. Other contributions include improvements in labor relations. Employees that perceive that they have access to communicate personal and work pressures, would be more likely to seek supervisor authorization by informing in advance, to be open to alternative arrangements to complete his work, and to feel respected, trusted, and more valuable to the organization.

Implications for Social Change

The results of this research study could contribute to positive social change by improving organizational communication, support, and recognition; as well as, leadership behavior, work environment, and compensation. To the individual worker, the social benefits could come from the effects of having a better work environment where management is willing to listen and to assist worker to deal with personal challenges including personal health challenges by accessing free medical advice and some medicines, or transportation to and from work. Furthermore, employees might benefit emotionally as a results of feeling respected, trusted, and valued by the organization. In addition, by reducing absences, workers could potentially increase their take home paid via not losing wages due to absenteeism and earning bonuses related to good attendance.

To the community in general, the understanding of effective policies could serve companies' leaders to establish policies and expectations that deal with cultural expectation of maquiladora employees in Mexico. Management might adapt cultural friendly strategies to proactively aid workers in finding solutions to recurrent personal challenges. Companies that implement supporting environments for their workers are likely to experience employees that display higher level of citizenship behaviors in reciprocity for the additional organizational services and the closeness to their supervisor.

Recommendations for Action

The findings revealed several conclusions and approaches regarding strategies operational managers use to help reduce employee absenteeism in participant organizations. The results of this multiple case-study could assist organizational

managers, from both operations and HR functions, in the evaluation and drafting of strategies that could help them reduce employee absenteeism that would support keeping operational efficiencies and meeting customers' expectations on a consistent basis.

Based on study findings, I recommend that organizations should adopt policies geared toward understanding employee's needs, both inside and outside of work. Participant O1P2 highlighted the importance for organizations to understand and be responsive to employees' personal needs in order to reduce absenteeism. Organizational leaders should support and live these policies by promoting a work environment where employees' needs are considered and some degree of flexibility provided to accommodate reasonable employee's requests. O2P1 shared the experience that by providing the flexibility in the work schedule, by taking time off during the shift, the organization experienced a significant decrease in the length of time absent. Furthermore, management should require all levels of supervision and employees service support personnel to adopt a service oriented and welcoming attitude toward employees' demands and interactions that would facilitate open communication and caring for employees.

Organization managers should put in place attendance policies that are in concordance with the desire work environment, providing both clear expectations for attendance as well as boundaries of flexibility toward permission and absenteeism. O6P1 indicated the need to communicate, monitor, and enforce attendance policies to ensure the needs of production do not interfere with the need for discipline in attendance. Equally important, O3P2 highlighted the positive impact of recognizing perfect

attendance to motivate employees not to miss work and others to want to emulate.

Organization leaders should require managers to communicate policies, to recognize and praise perfect or close to perfect attendance records, and to take disciplinary action with recurrent unjustified absenteeism.

Information regarding these results could be distributed to the public through professional publications and conferences within the maquiladora industry along the US–Mexico border. Moreover, these results may apply to other manufacturing and processing sectors and might assist, not only in reducing absenteeism, but also reduce potentially future turnover.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study was a 6-case qualitative multiple case-study design, exploring accounts and perceptions of a knowledgeable and experience sample of operational managers from manufacturing and processing maquiladora industries in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. I found very little research on employee absenteeism in production settings. Furthermore, I did not find studies on effective strategies on the maquiladora industry in Mexico. In the process of continuing to find ways to reduce employee absenteeism, researchers may help companies draft better and more complete strategies to lower absenteeism. Therefore, a researcher could expand this qualitative study to include cultural expectations taken from employees' accounts of perceptions regarding absenteeism from the employees' personal point of view. Employee perceptions could bring a perspective that could positively improve strategies by including employees' accounts and suggestions.

Researchers might also expand the identified strategy components to determine correlations of themes to actual absenteeism events using actual organizational data with additional opportunities to see analyze data over several time periods. By identifying actual correlation, researchers could benefit business organization to actually create models that help quantify potential budgetary requirements to deploy certain absenteeism reduction strategies. Once a quantitative model is established, researchers could go further, and determine comparative tools to account for differences among cities, industries, specific organizations, work shifts, and demographic variables to enrich future design of strategies to lower absenteeism.

Reflections

This qualitative descriptive multiple case study research involved exploring effective strategies operational managers use to reduce employee absenteeism. The identified targeted sample included 11 operational managers from six U.S. manufacturing and processing companies with locations in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. The research process consisted on conducting audio recorded semistructure interviews of qualified management participants. I used six open ended questions to allow gaining first-hand in depth information on strategies that have been effective on reducing employee absenteeism. I achieved data saturation within the 11 interviews when the strategies within the participants' answers became repetitive and no new themes were being discovered. In addition, participants shared graphs, minute notes, and written policies related to the oversight of managing employee absenteeism. Participants had very busy schedules which made it harder to secure appointments. Nevertheless, once the

interviews were conducted, participants were open and engaged in the interview. Participants confirmed the importance of reducing employee absenteeism for their organizations.

Conducting this research study was personally rewarding because of my background directing operations and having to constantly deal with the challenges of employees' absences. Furthermore, I can relate to participants' struggles and continual learning about ways to effectively manage the reduction of worker absenteeism. Lastly, I have enriched my perspective on the challenges of absenteeism and feel that my professional opportunities have been broadened as a result of this experience.

Conclusion

In this qualitative case study research, I explored effective strategies used by business managers in reducing employee absenteeism in U.S. manufacturing and processing companies located in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. Employee absenteeism interrupts the plans, execution, and achievement of organizational goals. When employees do not show to work, the work does not get done in the intended timeframe. Allisey et al. (2016) explained that employee absenteeism negatively impacts employees' productivity, raising costs from the loss capacity.

Based on the study findings, I concluded that an effective strategy to reduce employee absenteeism requires focusing on attending employee's needs and aligning organizational resources toward assisting employees attend personal challenges while achieving employees assigned tasks. The organization should put in place clear policies addressing supporting services, disciplinary actions for recurrent absenteeism,

compensation, bonuses, and other incentives for good attendance. In addition, management should insist in accurate job descriptions and screening procedures that help get the right people to the right jobs, as well as to monitor work environment to attend any area of employee discontent. Finally, supervisors should be trained and expected to conduct themselves with an attitude of service, empathy, good communication, and accessible to direct reports. These findings can be used to draft strategies that can reduce employee absenteeism in maquiladora operations in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Interview: Strategies to Reduce Employee Absenteeism

Date: _____ Location: _____

Interviewer: _____ Participant: _____

Instructions:

- A. Greet and explain the purpose of the study to the participant.
- B. Inform the participant about the audio recording of the interview, as well as to the note taking.
- C. Explain the later transcript review via e-mail process to confirm that the transcript accurately reflect the answers provided by the participant.
- D. Assure confidentiality, address all questions or concerns, and have the participant sign the release form.
- E. Recognize the sensitivity of their time and thank them for agreeing to participate on the study.
- F. Ask for any questions or concerns prior to starting the formal interview.
- G. Start recording by announcing the participant's identification code, as well as the date and time of the interview. Write the same information on top of the paper used for notes.
- H. Present the questions and obtain responses in order addressing for each question at a time.
- I. Thank the participant for their time and participation for the interview.
- J. Send the transcript to participant for his/her review and confirmation.

- K. Conduct corrections as apply.
- L. Again, send a thank you note to the participant for their time and participation for the interview.

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Interview questions for individual managers:

Interview Questions

1. How effective is your current strategy in dealing with employee absenteeism?
2. What are the top three causes that you think have affected employee absenteeism within the past year in this company?
3. How each of the three causes you mentioned was addressed within the strategy to help reduce employee absenteeism?
4. How do you measure the progress made in the reduction of employee absenteeism in the organization?
5. How is the employee absenteeism reduction strategy managed companywide?
6. What other additional steps, not talked about yet, have been taken into account to help reduce employee absenteeism?

Appendix C: Cooperation Letter from a Research Partner

Community Research Partner Name
Contact Information

Date

Dear Antonio Cachazo,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled Strategies to Reduce Maquiladora Employee Absenteeism in Mexico within Name of Community Partner. As part of this study, I authorize you to interact with the senior leaders to identify the best candidates for your study, conduct interviews with selected, and share documents and archives that may provide understanding and evidence of the strategies to reduce absenteeism. You may also conduct the study at our facilities. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: facility support and provide contact listing for your direct distribution of invitation letters to our senior leadership team. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and will not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,
Authorization Official
Contact Information

Appendix D: Invitation to Participate in the Study

Date mm/dd/yyyy

Mr/Mrs. Name of Participant,

My name is Antonio Cachazo and I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University. I am working on my capstone dissertation study to complete my Doctor of Business Administration degree with a concentration in Accounting. I am conducting a doctoral research study on what strategies do operational managers use to help reduce employee absenteeism.

I invite you, as a member of the management team, with working knowledge and first-hand experience of employee engagement at Name of Organization, to participate in my research study to explore strategies to help reduce employee absenteeism. Your participation in this study is not required and therefore completely voluntary.

I understand that your time is valuable. The interview process will take less than 60 minutes for us to meet and discuss techniques used and needed. Your identity will remain confidential and protected. After the interview is transcribed, you will receive a copy of your interview responses for review and approval. Upon request, you may receive a copy of a summary of results to help you understand what strategies operational managers use to help reduce employee absenteeism.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me directly. I look forward talking with you further

Sincerely,
Antonio Cachazo
antonio.cachazo@waldenu.edu